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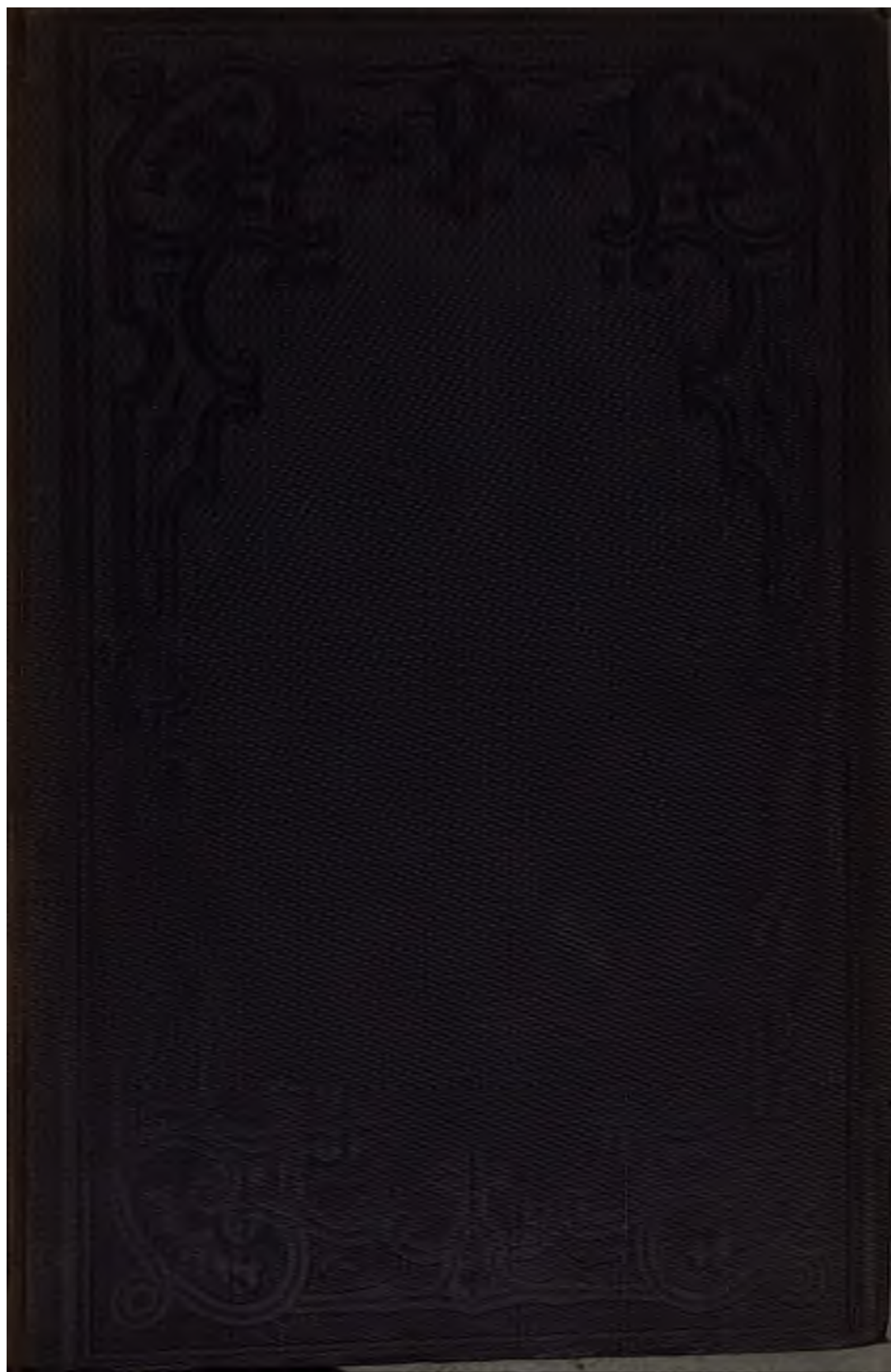
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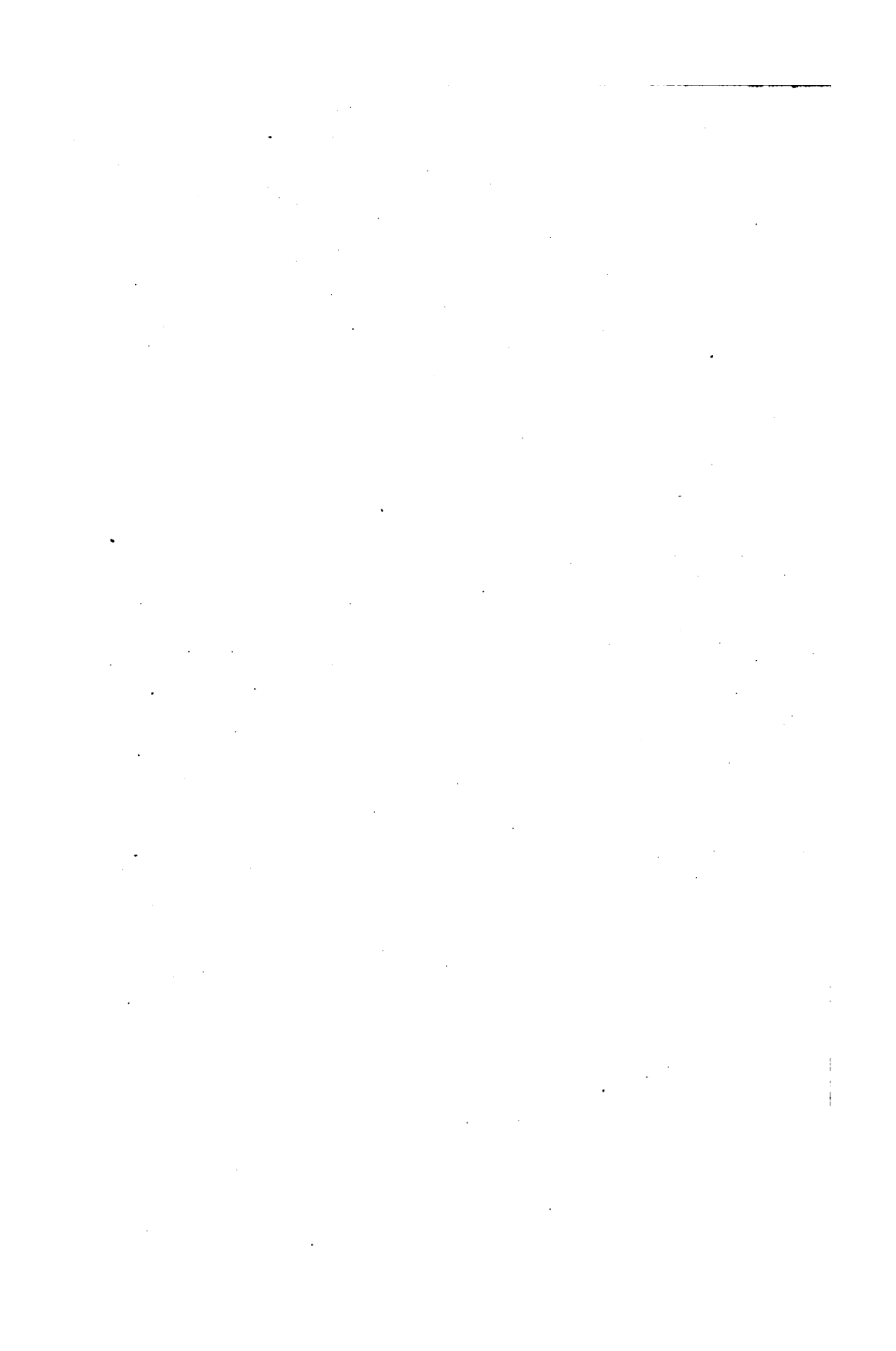
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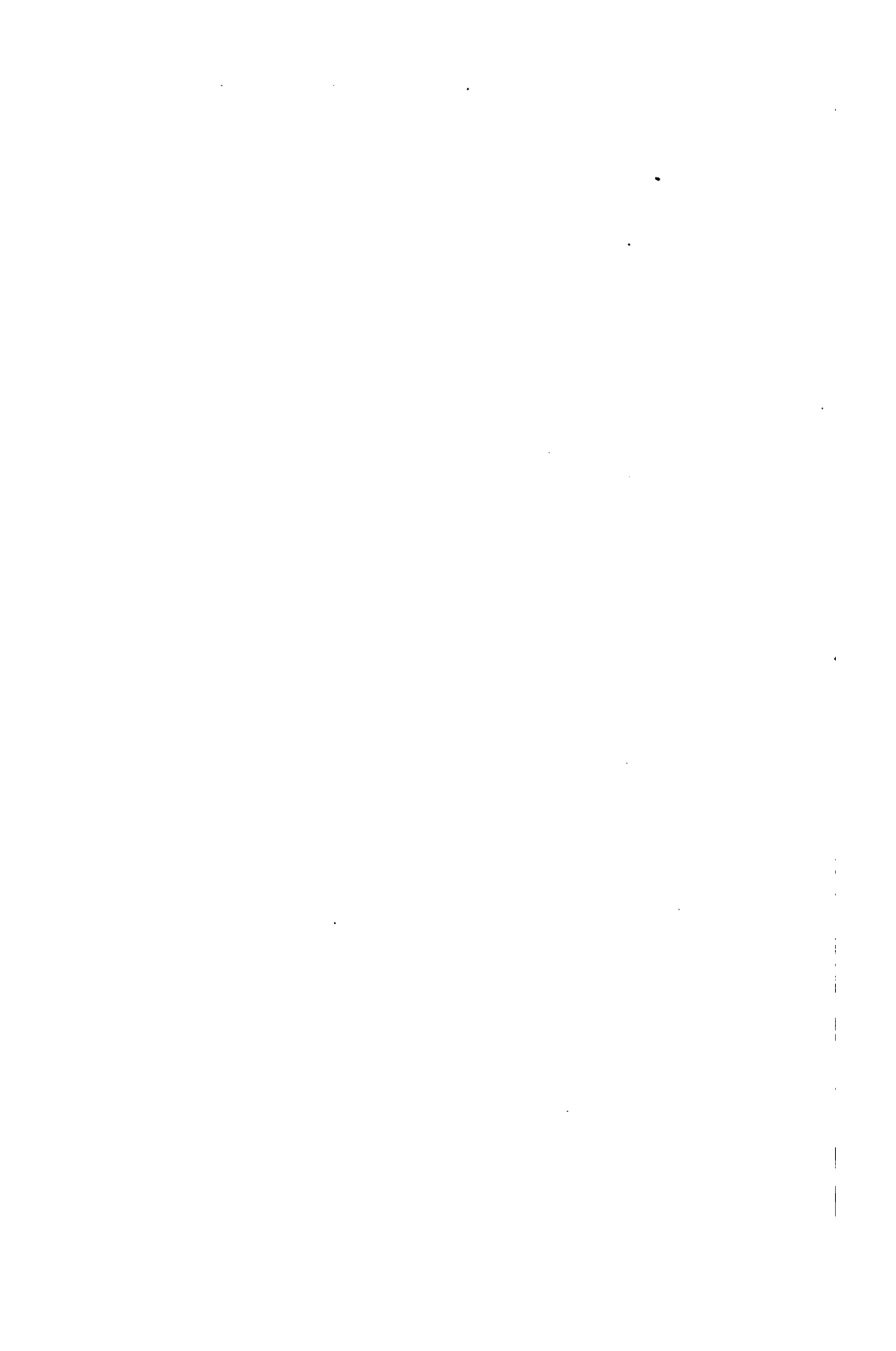
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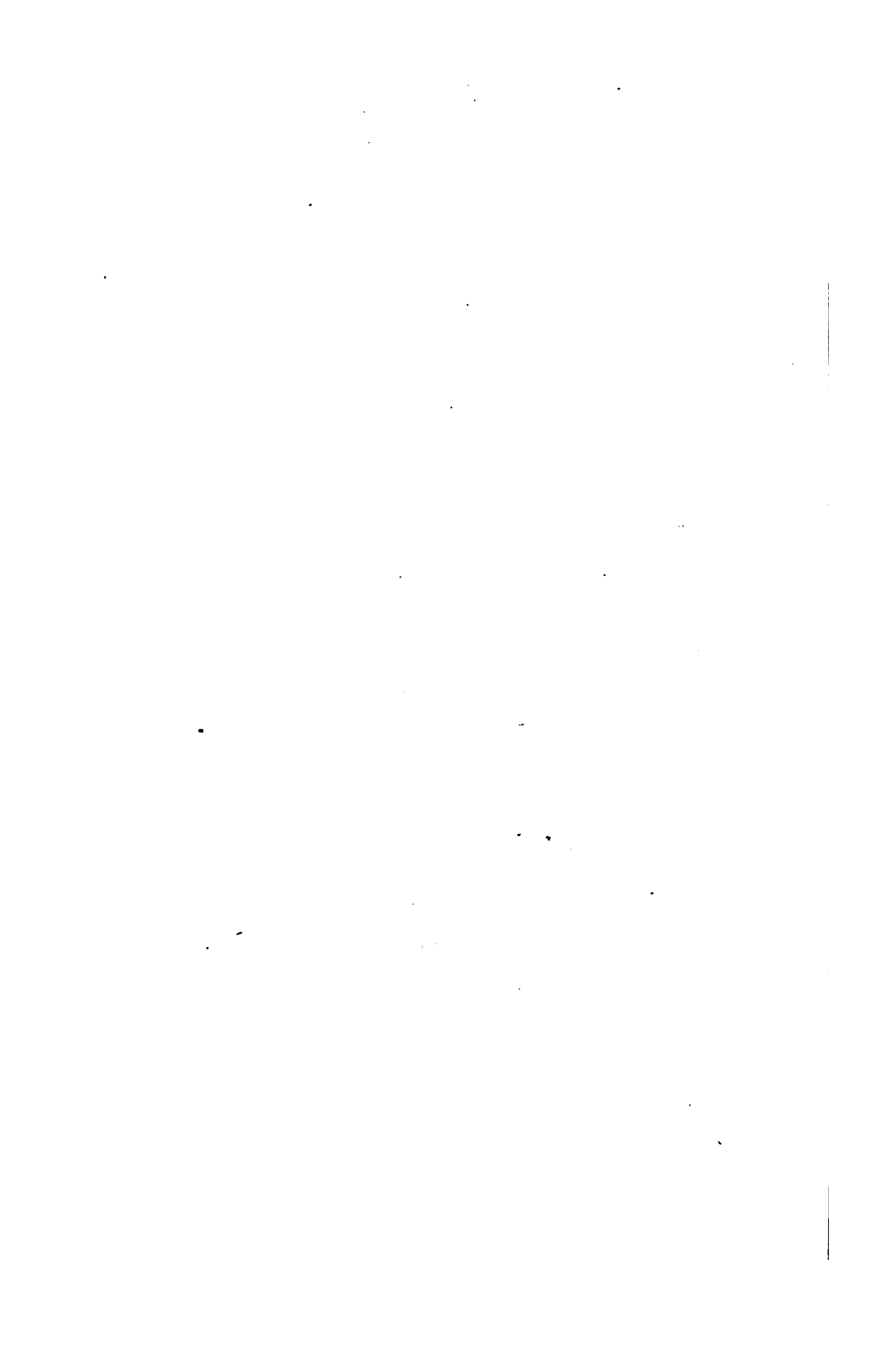
LECTURES
ON
BAPTISM.



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PREFACE.

THE following discourses, now collected into one volume, were originally published separately, which will account for their not being continuously paged. This circumstance may cause, in referring to particular passages, a slight inconvenience which, perhaps, the Table of Contents will partially obviate.

A knowledge of human nature forbids the anticipation that any investigation of the important subject of Baptism will command the cheerful assent of all. In these fickle times, the religious principles of a few are being unsettled. Even well-disposed individuals, bewildered by strong assertions from zealous partizans, are sometimes chargeable with imprudence in adopting unscriptural practices, rather than hazard, as they *think*, the danger of omitting the smallest ceremony which the Lord requires to be observed. Popery, in various forms, is secretly exerting every power to regain its lost influence. Some are boldly denying the claims of the Bible to inspiration and implicit obedience. Others, by scoffing or sneering at religious feeling, in their demoralizing publications widely circulated, are gradually slackening the moral cords which bind the public mind to sound doctrine and holy action. Many, by adding to the Word

of God, are confounding modern and superstitious inventions with undefiled Christianity, that they may *do* something for the salvation of their souls ; whilst the displeasure of the spiritually proud, who seek victory by abuse and not the truth by solid reasoning, rises in proportion as they are defeated in their objects. Indeed, the condition of the world,—professing itself Christian,—is such, that men of ordinary discernment are prepared to witness, in these matters, an exhibition of any amount of human folly. The most cogent arguments from Scripture may therefore not be expected to produce fully their desired and legitimate effects. Still, the author has the satisfaction of knowing that, even already, his humble labours, in defence of infant baptism, have not been altogether in vain ; and he fondly hopes, for the honour of our Saviour, a yet larger blessing will accompany these lectures.

W. R.

WINDSOR COTTAGE,
1856.

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BAPTISM.

"I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance: but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire."

MATT. iii. 11.

My auditors are aware that "Baptism" is the present subject of discussion, to which the above words are selected as the starting point. I do not stand forward to rail against, or malign, either individuals, or communities of my fellow-Christians. My simple object is to defend the doctrines and institutions of the Bible, as these were originally delivered to the Saints, and as they have been, through the merciful providence of the Lord, transmitted unimpaired to modern times; and to expose the fallacy of certain applications, as well as the misconstruction—unintentional, no doubt—of several passages of the Word of God.

I have neither solicited nor provoked this debate. Most of you will remember that, a few years ago, in small publications, widely circulated among our population, infant baptism was characterised as "unreasonable, unscriptural, and soul-destroying;" as "the prop and pillar of Popery:" those baptized in infancy alone, and not re-baptized in mature

years, were condemned as "living in sin:" those churches in which infant-baptism is believed and practised were declared not to be "Churches of Christ;" and free communion among the saints—or fellowship at the Lord's Table with believers in infant baptism—was reprobated as "muffling the bell of the gospel," and "wrapping a silken cord around the sword of the Spirit!" These strong terms, so unlike the gentleness of Christianity, are quoted from the tracts alluded to, and are not mine. When, however, one class of professing Christians can so speak of their neighbours, there must, on either one side or the other, be something materially wrong; and the guilty parties incur, by casting a serious stumblingblock before the enemy without, a deep responsibility.

We fondly hoped we would have enjoyed uninterrupted peace on this question; but we have been again challenged to defend our principles and practice; and have been followed to our church-doors, with the implied charge that our baptism is not Christian. I frankly confess that too much ignorance prevails on this subject, and I am not reluctant to embrace this opportunity of dispelling that ignorance, to the utmost of my humble ability. I do not pause, however, to consider some questions, frequently mixt up—to the confusion of simple minds—with the subject of baptism, and which are entirely irrelevant. The chief of these are, a particular form of Church government and discipline; in what denomination, or individual church, there is the greatest amount of brotherly love, piety, zeal, activity, and purity. To settle these topics equitably requires a stronger and more impartial mind than falls to the lot of most men; and though a righteous verdict were pronounced, the main subject of discussion would remain untouched, and every man would speak and act according to his own knowledge, fancy, or vanity. This we know, that the more godly a man is, he will be the more humble; he will think the less of himself, and the more of his brethren.

In the few lectures, of which the present is the first, the Bible exclusively must be our guide. Whoever affirms that we derive the ordinance of infant-baptism, or the practice of sprinkling, from any other source than the Word of God, inflicts an injury upon us, exposes himself to the charge of being a false accuser of his brethren, and of proclaiming his ignorance of the cause he professes to condemn. To clear our way, therefore, and lay a solid foundation, we shall, in the first place, glance at the three following points: they shall be afterwards more fully considered, and the necessary evidence produced :—

1st. The most strenuous efforts are made to show that what is called “the Abrahamic covenant” contained—respecting infants—no spiritual blessings; that it was entirely secular or civil, referring to national and temporal benefits in the land of Canaan. These efforts, which divide this covenant into two distinct sections, are intended to deprive children of all spiritual privileges under the Jewish economy. But what was this covenant? Simply a promise, consisting of various parts, yet forming one whole, and made by the Lord to the Patriarch who, by offering repeated sacrifices, gratefully acknowledged his obligations to infinite goodness and mercy. Now, I shall prove that this covenant contained, in the explicit prediction that in Abraham’s seed should “all the nations of the earth be blessed,” the sum of the gospel; that *this* promise—or covenant—was the best of all the other promised blessings, and was the ground on which they were bestowed. Hence the venerable saint did not exult over the possession of Palestine, nor over a numerous offspring, but over Him whose day he beheld “afar off, and was glad.” It was this *chiefly* that he believed, and it was *this* faith alone that “was counted unto him for righteousness.” Into the whole, and not into any particular part alone, of this holy covenant, were Abraham’s children initiated, not by the edicts of *earthly* sovereigns, but upon the express authority of God.

2nd. It has been often declared, that the Jewish and Christian Churches were as essentially distinct as mother and daughter are, or as two friends brought accidentally together. This separation is attempted for the avowed purpose of casting children out of the Church of God. It is a pity that such means should be employed to gain such an object ; or, perhaps, the means and the end are worthy of each other. I shall prove, however, that the Jewish and Christian Churches, as they are called, were essentially the same ; that there has been, and can be, only one "Church of the living God ;" that to Jew and Gentile, bond and free, Scythian and barbarian, male and female, who have believed in God through Jesus Christ, and that to the "babes and sucklings"* out of whose mouths God hath ordained praise, as well as to the aged Simeon, Anna, or John, the same Jehovah has been a Father, the same Jesus a Redeemer, the same Spirit a Sanctifier, and the same heaven a last but lasting home. In connection with this Church, whose oneness is its glory and our consolation, there may be, at different times, different rites and ceremonies : her external robes may be changed, but she herself is unchanging and unchangeable as her Lord. Nay, the same love that binds all the faithful upon the earth in one bond of brotherhood, unites the saints below and the ransomed above into one church, whose members are—merely for a short time—separated "by the narrow stream of death." Paul says : "For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named."† Let no man, therefore, for any party or sectarian purpose, endeavour to put asunder what Jehovah has so intimately and essentially conjoined.

3d. We are perpetually and confidently asked to produce one precept for infant-baptism in the New Testament. Now, the burden of proof, as I shall afterwards show, rests with

* Ps. viii., 2.

† Eph. iii., 14, 15.

our opponents ; and their demand is an effort to remove from themselves a task which they cannot perform. Besides, if the blessed Saviour, who knew exactly what was requisite for the purity and establishing of his house, did not deem a new precept necessary, either for or against infants being introduced into his church, in more modern times, is it not reasonable to conclude, that he deemed the ancient instructions sufficient ; and is not the demand, therefore, a tacit, though unintentional, impeachment of his wisdom ? No new precept was needed, and none was given, upon either the permanent observance of the Lord's Day, the admission of females to the Lord's table, or the reception of children into his church. All these matters are, so far, upon an equality, that they were the subjects of direct, or indirect prediction, that the people expected a continuance of ancient privileges, modified to suit the necessary change of circumstances ; and Christ acted in accordance with that expectation. I shall, therefore, prove, that the children of believing parents were once in covenant connection with God ; that they enjoyed the initiatory rite into his church ; that he promised the children of his people should " be as aforetime ;" that when Christ came, he fulfilled this part of the prophets as well as every other ; that the Jews utter no complaint because the former privileges of their children were abridged or abrogated ; that they confidently expected these privileges were to be extended, and not one syllable of disappointment or disapprobation is expressed ; and that no new precept is given or demanded to suit the exigencies of an unknown and unexpected ceremony, for the simple reason that nothing new was introduced. Now, since children were once in connection with the church, we confidently ask—and adult-baptists* are bound to prove—when, how, where, or by whom, were they cast out ?

* This term is employed merely as a distinctive appellation, and not from any disrespect. It denotes those who maintain that adults alone should be baptized.

It is, indeed, replied that they are excluded by the very words of the institution ; that men must believe, repent, be taught, and afterwards be baptised ; but children, being incapable of believing, repenting, and receiving instructions, "must be excluded." This is an evasion, not a reply. The promise to Abraham, though differently expressed, was as spiritual and extensive as the institution of baptism. Faith and repentance were as much required by the adult then as they are now ; for the principal difference in the two cases was this : —the ancient believer looked, by faith, to a coming Messiah, the modern subject of grace beholds a glorified Redeemer. Since children were admitted into the spiritual and comprehensive covenant of old, by whom are they now deprived of their privileges ? Notwithstanding human "suppositions" to the contrary, we believe, because the Bible teaches, that God grafted them into "his vine which he brought out of Egypt,"* and he alone can cut them off.

It is again said, that in the New Testament we read of none but adults having been baptised, and none else should be so admitted into the Church. The sum of this statement is, that our opponents "*suppose*" no children were baptised, and argue upon this assumption as if it were an undoubted fact. We can receive, as authority, no such conjectures, and request an explicit proof ; for, could suppositions and probabilities decide the matter, we unhesitatingly affirm that these are in our favour. The circumstance that adults were baptised by the Apostles has converted thousands to adult-baptism, has been understood to embrace and settle the whole case at issue ; and yet it has nothing whatever to do with the proper subject of debate. The question is not, "Is an adult, when first addressed by the Gospel, required, before being received to baptism, to confess his faith and repentance ?" but, "After his own admission

* Ps. lxxx., 8.

into the Church, does this believer claim, upon the authority of God, the baptism of his infant children?" The case of mature persons is thus entirely distinct from that of infants. Our missionaries, therefore, whether in the sunny East, or in the frozen North, proceed exactly as the Apostles manifestly did, in baptising adult converts and their households into the name of Jesus. God's authority alone can deprive children of their ancient privileges, which were as sacred and secure as those of their parents, and, until we receive that authority—being bound to obey the revelation which we do possess—it is at our peril to substitute the conjectures of men for the commandments of the Lord. Nor is this all. To cast an individual out of the Church, is virtually to consign the excommunicated party to Satan to be buffeted. How deep, then, must be the responsibility of those who, in this matter, voluntarily assume the prerogative of their Maker!

Second.—A few words on what baptism is not, may enable us to form a more distinct conception of what it is.

1st. It is not the conferring of a name. On this department of the subject, too, many parents may have erroneous notions, which our opponents are not slack to employ against our cause, though the ignorance of Simon Magus might, with equal injustice, be adduced against adult-baptism. In dispensing the ordinance, it may be both proper and scriptural to give the name of the baptised individual; but unless it be "written in the Lamb's book of life,"* the mere pronouncing of that name by a fellow-mortal will be of *no* avail.

2nd. It is not regeneration. It is only the sign, regeneration is the thing signified; the first is performed by man, the second is the exclusive work of the Holy Ghost; the one is an outward act, the other is the internal operation of the Spirit upon man's immortal soul. There is, therefore, no more identity between them, than between a type and its anti-

* Rev. xxi., 27

type,—than there is between a shadow and the substance that makes it. At whatever age we are baptised, we must, irrespective of all outward rites and ceremonies, undergo that process of being made “a new creature” in Christ Jesus, before we can enter into the kingdom of Heaven.

3d. It is, in ordinary circumstances, an incumbent duty which no right-hearted Christian will lightly esteem ; but it is not essential to salvation. Were it so, the penitent malefactor on the cross could not have appeared in Paradise, nor could children, dying in infancy, even though the offspring of believers, be received into glory :—a doctrine that is contrary to the whole tenor of Scripture.

4th. It is not, even when properly observed, a certain security for the blessings which it symbolizes. Baptism is but one department of Christian duty, and when this, as well as every other duty, has been performed, we must acknowledge ourselves to be unprofitable servants, and must look beyond all that we can do, and all that we deserve, to the atoning sacrifice of Immanuel, as the only, but all-sufficient grounds on which any blessing can be obtained. It consequently follows, that, after the ordinance has been observed, the prayer of faith must still be offered, that the promised blessings, which baptism symbolizes, may be graciously vouchsafed ; and these blessings are embraced by the Apostle in the sweet and extensive sentence, “the blood of sprinkling that speaketh better things than that of Abel.”*

Third.—What is baptism ? I at present speak of the ordinance apart from its subjects, or mode of administration. These will be considered in their proper place.

1st. It is a public and solemn exhibition of sin. No doctrine is more frequently held up before us in the Bible,—none is more fervently enforced upon us than this : “There is none righteous, no not one.”† As if reasoning had failed the

* Heb. xii., 24.

† Rom. iii., 10.

Apostle on this important truth, he gathers all his arguments into this sweeping statement: "That every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God."* But baptism points to Calvary's cross, for pardon and for peace. In Acts xxii. 16, we read: "And now, why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, *calling on the name of the Lord.*" Every infant, as well as every adult, needs pardon, because death has passed upon men of all ages and climes, "for all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God."† Through the atonement of Jesus, therefore, must the souls of departed infants, baptized, or not baptized, enter into eternal bliss.

2nd. It is a public and solemn exhibition of spiritual impurity. That we are defiled and need purification, as well as guilty and require forgiveness, is another doctrine which pervades the Bible. The leper exclaimed: "Unclean, unclean."‡ But a prophet bewails his spiritual leprosy, and pathetically says: "Wo is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips;"§ and David cries: "Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean: wash me, and I shall be whiter than the snow."|| The Lord said, by Ezekiel: "Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you."¶ John the Baptist says: "he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire:"** which means, that as fire is pure, and purifies all with which it comes into contact, so must the whole man be spiritually purified and renovated. Jesus himself thus spake: "Except a man be born of water, and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God:"†† that is, unless the whole man be cleansed by the Spirit, as the body is cleansed by water, there can be no hope of endless felicity.

* Rom. iii., 19. † Rom. iii., 23.

‡ Levit. xiii., 45. § Isa. vi., 5.

|| Ps. li., 7.

¶ Ezek. xxxvi., 25.

** Mat. iii., 11.

†† John, iii., 5.

These are specimens of the expressions which inculcate our moral defilement, and the necessity for divine agency to purify us, and make us "holiness unto the Lord."* As in the Lord's Supper, the bread and wine symbolize the body and blood of Immanuel—the one broken, and the other shed for human guilt—so, in the ordinance of baptism, the water points to the life-giving fountain of mercy, benignly "opened to the house of David, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, for sin and for uncleanness,"† that we therein may be "washed, sanctified, and justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God."‡ Hence Ananias said to Paul: "Be baptized, and *wash away* thy sins."§

3d. Baptism is a distinguishing sign. An act, by which a community is singled out from all others, must be publicly known, be definite, significant, safe from counterfeit, always the same, and enjoined by competent authority. Such a sign is baptism. It is that by which the followers of Jesus are known to each other, and to the world. Hence the Apostle says, in 1st Cor. i., 13-15: "Is Christ divided? was Paul crucified for you? or were ye baptized in the name of Paul? I thank God that I baptized none of you, but Crispus and Gaius; lest any should say that I had baptized in mine own name." He here distinctly teaches the unity of the Church in Jesus, and that baptism is the distinctive badge of the disciples,—neither of Paul, nor of Apollos, nor of Cephas, but of our blessed Redeemer.

4th. It is a public symbol of the bestowment and agency of the Holy Spirit. In Eph. v. 26, 27, we are told, that Christ will present his "glorious Church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing," having sanctified and cleansed "it with the washing of water by the word." In Acts, ii. 17, 18, 33, we read of the fulfilment of a prediction, spoken by Joel, that

* Jer. ii., 3. † Zech. xiii., 1. ‡ 1st Cor. vi., 11. § Acts, xxii., 16.

God would pour out his "Spirit upon all flesh" without respect of persons. To prevent the possibility of a doubt that this "pouring out" was the same as the baptism "of the Spirit," Peter says, in Acts xi. 15, 16: "And as I began to speak, the Holy Ghost fell on them, as on us at the beginning. Then remembered I the word of the Lord, how that he said John indeed baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost."

We are told that, as the baptized individual is immersed in the water, so must we be immersed in the Holy Spirit. The believer, according to this doctrine, is active, and approaches the Spirit, who—were such a symbol correct—is passive; and the doctrine of salvation by grace is thus destroyed. In the passages, however, quoted above—and they are only a few selected from many—we have a distinct symbol of the Spirit's sanctifying power, and of the mode in which he and the souls of men come into contact. He is *not* passive, or still, like water, and the baptized individual immersed into him; but the believer is passive, and the Spirit is active, for he is "poured out," and the true Christian receives his "blest effusions." All is thus of free, sovereign, active grace, and God is glorified in our salvation.

5th. It is a covenant engagement. Our Redeemer, when a few days old, was presented to the Lord, by his parents, in the Temple of Jerusalem, and he thus early began "to fulfil all righteousness." Baptism, then, if an adult be baptized, is a solemn dedication of ourselves to Jehovah, an acknowledgment that he is the Maker of our bodies and the Father of our spirits, a pledge that we have received Christ as our only Saviour, that we love him "with a pure heart fervently," shall keep his commandments, and honour his name by holding "fast our profession." Or, if children are presented in baptism, it is a devout confession that they are gifts from God, that the care of immortal souls is committed to our charge, and is a religious engagement to train them in the

nurture and admonition of the Most High. It thus becomes a twofold act—a dedication of the child, and a vow of fidelity on the part of the parent. How sacred and responsible is such a deed ! How seldom its obligations are felt !

6th. It is a public and devout lesson to all. Every time we witness the dispensation of the ordinance, we are reminded that we also have been “baptized into the name of Jesus ;” that we are bound to rise and to walk with him in newness of life, and that we must become “like little children,” if we would “enter into the kingdom of God.”

Such is a hurried sketch of what baptism is, whether infants or adults be the subjects of it. What reason to adore the great Head of the Church, for the institution of a rite so simple, yet so full of spiritual import ; a rite, too, which, by its frequent recurrence, is so well fitted to keep us humble in the vale of conscious guilt, whilst it points our eye of faith to the hill of sovereign mercy, whence “doth come our aid !” Here, as in whatever Christ has done, are we constrained to acknowledge, “Just and true are thy ways, thou King of Saints.”* Christ “doeth all things well.”†

I now pause to ask : Are children faithful ? You are rightly expected to hear with reverence what pious parents teach. The first command with a promise is : “Honour thy father and thy mother.”‡ The prevailing disobedience to parents, the increasing crime and impiety of our youth, are fearful evidence that this holy command is little known and less realised. Every transgression is to be deplored, and every means should be employed to reclaim the most abandoned ; but of all offenders, perhaps the most depraved is a proud, insolent, ignorant, and unfeeling youth, who trifles with the claims of old age, and, above all, who sports with the sacred feelings and interests of a father and a mother. The party guilty of such unmanly baseness

* Rev. xv., 3.

† Mark vii., 37.

‡ Exod. xx. 12.

is, in my estimation, among the most unlovely and hopeless of mortals, and needs few lessons to harden him for the most flagrant crimes. Forget not that he who "curseth father or mother shall die the death."* But it is also written: "Remember thy Creator in the days of thy youth."† "I love them that love me; and those that seek me early shall find me."‡

Under no feigned sense of my position, I ask: Are parents faithful? Your obligations are sacred, and responsibility is deep. If you would secure the esteem of your offspring, have peace of conscience, and arrest abounding profligacy, you must establish the youthful mind in love to God, as the true and permanent basis of morality and filial affection. Let it be engraven on your memory, that the youth—male or female—who are not taught to love God supremely, will never obey nor respect their parents. As you value your own eternal welfare, as you would keep your hands clear of the blood of your offspring, you must instruct, pray, and, by your consistent example, lead them in the paths of virtue, piety, and religion; you must walk "with perfect hearts," before the world, the Church, and your households, that your homes may be little Bethels, in which "God delighteth to dwell" "Fathers, provoke not your children to anger, lest they be discouraged."§

I ask, as in the presence of the "Searcher of hearts": Is every one walking worthy of his high vocation? Our undeserved, yet often abused privileges, are numerous; our accountability is proportioned to our blessings, and a final reckoning awaits all within these walls. Are we prepared for that account? Every thought, word, and action, public and private, shall, on that day of retribution, be laid in the balance of infinite equity, and the Judge shall either address

* Matt. xv., 4.

† Eccl. xii., 1.

‡ Prov. viii., 17.

§ Col. iii. 21.

us with the sweetest of salutations: "Well done, good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make the ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy Lord"*; or pronounce the terrible, irrevocable doom: "Mene, Mene, Tekel, Upharsin":—"Thou art weighed in the balances, and art found wanting."† May we be faithful in allthings, and faithful unto death, that we may obtain "a crown of life."‡ Amen.

* Matt. xxv., 23.

† Dan. v., 27.

‡ Rev. ii., 10.

BAPTISM.

SECOND LECTURE;

DELIVERED BY

THE REV. W. RITCHIE,

BERWICK-ON-TWEED.

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ERRATA.

In page 16, second line from foot, for *previous* read *precious*.

In page 55 thirteenth line from foot, for *was* read *were*.

B A P T I S M.

“For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call.” ACTS ii. 39.

WE formerly introduced, for the purpose of laying a proper foundation, three subjects on which we promised suitable proofs in their proper time and place. We now implement that engagement. To fore-close the whole case, and prevent further discussion, or, at least, to render debate superfluous, we are gravely told by adult-baptists, that the Mosaic and Christian Churches were totally distinct communities. This bold assertion is made, that children may be deprived of all participation in the external privileges of the Church of Christ, which is then moulded to suit circumstances. The words of adult-baptists are: “We lay aside the Mosaic Church, and all its ceremonies, as perfectly useless, and apt to lead into gross errors.” Paul, in his various epistles, and especially in that to the Hebrews, informs us how, and to what extent, the old economy has given place to the new. Taking this Apostle as our guide, who must be acknowledged to be a competent authority, it may be pro-

fitable to inquire what the Bible teaches on the subject ; in what manner the Old and New Testament Scriptures illustrate and explain each other ; and it is possible that the result of our examination may be a conviction, that those who so briefly discard the Mosaic as entirely disconnected with the Christian Church, may be acting—whatever be their sincerity—in direct opposition to the instructions of the Spirit of Wisdom. True, the Bible, in the following sublime terms, speaks of a renovated Church, and of a restored people of Israel:—"For, behold, I create new heavens, and a new earth ; and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind."* It is sufficiently obvious that this is a renovation of the former, not the creation of a new and distinct Church ; for the prophet adds : "For they are the seed of the blessed of the Lord, and their offspring with them."† This same idea is uniformly kept in view by the writers of both the Old and New Testaments.

Anxious to condense our observations, we shall adduce only a specimen of the evidence which we could supply, and shall leave to your own private and prayerful meditations the full working out of the case. Being directed to the proper mode of investigation, and supplied with some materials, the subject will, if you labour for yourselves, make a deeper, a more permanent, and, under the Divine blessing, a more sanctifying impression upon your hearts. Eagerly receive information from every human source ; but let the prayer of David be your constant supplication : "O send out thy light and thy truth ; let them lead me, let them bring me unto thy holy hill, and to thy tabernacles."‡

First :—The identity of the Mosaic and Christian Churches.

1st. Isaiah xlix. 20-22.—"The children which thou shalt have, after thou hast lost the other, shall say again in thine

* Isa. lxx. 17.

† Isa. lxx. 23.

‡ Ps. xliii. 3.

ears, the place is too strait for me ; give place to me that I may dwell. Then shalt thou say in thine heart, who hath begotten me these, seeing I have lost my children, and am desolate, a captive, and removing to and fro ? and who hath brought up these ? Behold, I was left alone ; these, where had they been ? Thus saith the Lord God, behold, I will lift up mine hand to the Gentiles, and set up my standard to the people ; and they shall bring thy sons in their arms, and thy daughters shall be carried upon their shoulders." The Church is thus represented as a parent distressed at the loss of children, but comforted by new accessions to her household, until her residence becomes too small, and she is obliged to enlarge her habitation. In other words, the believing Gentiles are added to the Church of God, and do not constitute a new and distinct family.

2d. Amos ix. 11, 12.—"In that day will I raise up the tabernacle of David that is fallen, and close up the breaches thereof ; and I will raise up his ruins, and I will build it as in the days of old ; that they may possess the remnant of Edom, and of all the heathen which are called by my name, saith the Lord that doeth this." The Church is here spoken of as a city, or house, whose walls are fallen down ; but the breaches are repaired, that both the native inhabitants and many others can live within them with comfort and safety. We are thus taught that the Church of God, formed in ancient times, shall extend her boundaries until they embrace the world ;—the old community is enlarged, no new one is formed.

3d. Acts xv. 14-17.—"Simeon hath declared how God at the first did visit the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for his name. And to this agree the words of the prophet ; as it is written, after this I will return, and will build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen down ; and I will build again the ruins thereof, and I will set it up ;

that the residue of men might seek after the Lord, and all the Gentiles, upon whom my name is called, saith the Lord, who doeth all these things." In these verses, the Apostle, in language sufficiently plain,—if the Bible is permitted to advocate its own cause,—applies, to the in-gathering of the Gentiles to the ancient Church, the very words we have quoted from Amos ; and proves, in opposition to all human conjectures to the contrary, that under both dispensations there is but one household of faith.

In Zechariah xiii. 8, 9, we read :—" And it shall come to pass, that in all the land, saith the Lord, two parts therein shall be cut off, and die ; but the third shall be left therein. And I will bring the third part through the fire, and will refine them as silver is refined, and will try them as gold is tried ; they shall call on my name, and I will hear them ; I will say, it is my people ; and they shall say, the Lord is my God." Such are the sublime terms in which the Lord teaches the unity, faith, holiness, and spirituality, of the Church in her New Testament worship.

4th. Eph. ii. 12, 14, 19.—"That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world. For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us. Now, therefore, ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God." Jews and Gentiles are here placed upon an equality. There is no new church formed, though individuals, formerly apart, are united together. Whilst in unbelief and sin, the Galatians were aliens and strangers ; but they were brought near to God, and were, through Jesus Christ, made one with the believing Jews. The wall of separation between them was removed ; and, being partakers of the same faith, they became citizens of the same spiritual Zion, and members of the same believing family of God.

5th. In Mal. iii. 3, 4, we are informed that the Israelites, being purified as silver in the furnace, shall return to their first love, and "offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness," which shall "be pleasant unto the Lord, as in the days of old, and as in former years." In this sweet promise, there is the opposite of an intimation, that they should be constituted a new and distinct body, or denuded of any of their former rights and privileges.

6th. Paul tells us, Rom. xi. 17-21.—"And if some of the branches be broken off, and thou, being a wild olive-tree, wert grafted in among them, and with them partakest of the root and fatness of the olive-tree: boast not against the branches; but if thou boast, thou bearest not the root, but the root thee. Thou wilt say, then, the branches were broken off, that I might be grafted in. Well, because of unbelief they were broken off, and thou standest by faith. Be not high minded, but fear: For if God spared not the natural branches, take heed lest he also spare not thee." The above tree denotes the Church. Because of unbelief, the Hebrews had been lopped off from the Lord's vine—cast out of his Church; but having returned to God in faith, they were grafted into the old tree, not planted as a new one. They returned from their apostacy, and were re-admitted members of the Church of whose privileges and blessings they had deprived themselves. The Jews were natural branches, because they were descended from Abraham, to whom the promise was made, "I will be a God unto thee and to thy seed." By being grafted in again, they were placed in the same church-state as they were before being broken off, and both they and their infants were entitled to church privileges as formerly: every thing of which they had been bereft by unbelief and disobedience was restored to their faith and penitence. The believing Jews and Gentiles were thus united in one community, being

received together into the bosom of the ancient Church of God, while they and their children were admitted to privileges as of old.

Language could not be more explicit and comprehensive than that quoted above, and the Bible abounds with passages of a similar import. Throughout the entire of the Old and New Testaments the writers uniformly speak of the purification and extension of the former Church, and never, for one moment, contemplate the formation of a new one. No particular nation, or class, or *sex*, was to be specially favoured by the exclusion of another; for "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female; for ye are all one in Christ Jesus."* All, without respect of persons, were to participate in the spiritual privileges of the ancient Church, now purified, and its external rites accommodated to all constitutions of every age, and to both sexes in every country and clime. It is our consolation, that no new Church was needed, because there was no new method of salvation to be announced. To serve party or sectarian purposes, disputants may endeavour to divide it into two distinct and independent portions. But the Spirit, who is poured down upon the nations, pronounces that its oneness is indissoluble; that what men call two Churches are respectively denominated, in the Bible, old and new communities, merely because of a change of outward circumstances; that the priesthood, rites, and ceremonies, were changed; that the Jews anxiously looked to a coming Messiah, and Christians joyfully believe in a glorified Redeemer; that new and greater light was thrown around the saving grace of God; but that salvation through Jesus Christ, which was the spiritual and essential part of the old dispensation, remained unaltered and unalterable; and that the Mosaic and Christian dispensations

instead of being distinct and independent communities, are only the same household of faith in different external conditions. The same Heavenly Father, the same Angel of his presence, and the same Holy Ghost, who blessed an Abraham, or smiled in redeeming mercy upon an Abel, surround us with their "everlasting arms" of love, cover our tables, prolong our days, soothe our sorrows, continue our means of grace, pardon our sins, ransom our souls from death, and crown us with endless life. We, therefore, believe in, because the Scriptures reveal, only one "Bride, the Lamb's wife,"* who is his well-beloved of old: if He has a second, she exists merely in men's heated imaginations, and the Bible knoweth her not.

Our opponents are not more successful when they attempt, for the purpose of destroying infant baptism, to make the ancient typical of the present Church. Nowhere, *in the Scriptures*, is the Jewish Church said to be typical of the New Testament one, though some of its sacrifices and ablutions pre-figured Christ's atonement and the Spirit's operations. The passover and "the great day of atonement" directed the believing Hebrews to that benign Deliverer on whom God would lay the iniquities of a guilty world, and by whose stripes the souls of men must be healed; but the high-priest entering the holiest place and sprinkling the mercy-seat, as distinctly pointed them to Jesus entering the Holy of Holies above with his own blood in his hand. Jerusalem itself was a figure, not of any other earthly state of the Church, but of that "Jerusalem which is above," and "which is the mother of us all."† The Church of God upon earth, from the beginning of time, has uniformly fore-shadowed the same thing—"The general assembly and church of the first-born, which are written in heaven," and which embraces the spirits of all "the just made perfect." With

their faces towards this glorious throng on the celestial Zion, and which was typified by the one church in this wilderness, did Abel, Enoch, Abraham, Moses, with all the patriarchs and "holy men of old," travel patiently and hopefully to eternity. Yes, both dispensations were merely schools in which the children of the Lord were born anew, nursed by grace, and trained up, by the Holy Ghost, into a meetness for the everlasting inheritance—that "better country" of which Canaan was a type; both economies were merely pools whence the saints drank below of the same streams of bliss whose fountain-head is the throne of Jehovah.*

Second: The Abrahamic covenant. That covenant, the unity of the Church, the right of children to baptism, and whether pouring or immersion be the Scriptural mode of administering this ordinance, are the four cardinal points in the controversy. Among these, the first occupies a chief place. In proportion to its importance, are strenuous efforts made, by adult-baptists, to prove that the greater part of it was temporal and temporary in its provisions, including no spiritual blessings, and that with this department of it, into which alone were children initiated, was circumcision connected. This interpretation and division are attempted to be thrust upon it for the purpose of excluding children from baptism. It is rightly felt by our opponents, that, if the Abrahamic covenant contained spiritual blessings, and if circumcision, its initiatory rite, which children received, was also spiritual, then infants can neither be excluded from the Christian church, nor be denied—without God's express authority—the privilege of baptism, its initiatory rite, because *they* are spiritual. Since the matter is of such magnitude, we must endeavour to ascertain correctly from the Scriptures what are the nature and extent of that covenant. If we succeed in proving, as we are confident we shall,

* Rev. xxii. 1.

that the main part of it was spiritual, and that infants were initiated into this division of it, our cause shall be more than half-gained.

A covenant is a mutual agreement between two parties, for the gaining of some object of good or evil. It must be obvious that a covenant between God and man must rest upon a basis entirely different from that of all others. Every such arrangement, therefore, has consisted of two great parts,—support to the body and salvation to the soul. On neither of these blessings, first announced in Eden, and which are rather promises than covenants, can we have any claim beyond the sovereign pleasure of God. All subsequent promises—or covenants—are merely amplifications of these, and by Christ's atonement exclusively are they *both* received. The covenant of Abraham consists of a series of promises, delivered at various times, accepted by the patriarch, and ratified by outward acts of sacrifice or circumcision. It is first recorded in 'Gen. xii., 1, 2, 3, when he was called from his father's house, promised the land of Canaan, a numerous offspring, personal graces, and that in him should "all the families of the earth be blessed." The promise of the land is repeated in this chapter at the seventh verse, when he pitched his frail tent in the plain east of Shechem, and reared his humble altar to the living and true God. The promises are re-delivered, with some enlargement, in Gen. xiii. 14-17; xv. 7-18. On the latter of these occasions, an incident occurred which demands particular notice, because it is overlooked by our opponents, though it is decisive respecting what was the *first* and proper sign of the temporal promise. Abraham requested a sign of that promise, and God gave him *sacrifice*, not circumcision. This fact should be conclusive on the subject.

Gen. xvii. 1-10, also merits special attention. It is introduced with great solemnity: "I am the Almighty God:

walk before me, and be thou perfect." After repeating former promises, the Lord pledges himself "to be a God unto" Abraham and to his seed after him. He sums up this interview with the patriarch in these emphatic words: "Thou shalt keep my covenant therefore, thou and thy seed after thee, in their generations. This is my covenant, which ye shall keep, between me and you, and thy seed after thee; Every man-child among you shall be circumcised." Here is the institution of this rite, and so extensive and important is it, that it is substituted for the covenant itself, of which it was merely the external sign and initiatory ordinance. Nor should it be forgotten, that this ceremony is first enjoined immediately after a solemn command to keep the holy law of Jehovah,—immediately after *repeated* promises, "I will be their God," which ensured every needful blessing, for time and eternity; and not after the temporal promise exclusively, which had been previously ratified by a sacrifice of several animals. If, therefore, there was a spiritual ordinance, connected with spiritual blessings, under the Abrahamic covenant, that honoured institution was circumcision. What a pity that such a rite should, contrary to the Scriptures, and to exclude children from the Church of Christ, have been degraded by adult-baptists to the mere sign of an earthly boon, which holy and unholy could receive!

In the passages above named, whatever "suppositions may be adduced to the opposite, there is not the slightest intimation of two covenants, the one of works and the other of grace; nor that circumcision was connected with the first into which children were admitted, and not with the second from which they were excluded. Such a distinction is purely of human invention. That covenant—or promise, "I will be their God," contained, as the New Testament proves, the gospel which, being the chief, and best of all its blessings, was the grounds on which its other benefits were bestowed.

Being "confirmed before of God in Christ,"* it had for its noble object the salvation of mankind at large. To this covenant of grace was annexed the sign of circumcision, to which believers alone and their children submitted, but which neither the unbelieving nor ungodly received.

1st. The venerable patriarch is uniformly represented as the head of all that believe. Rom. iv. 16, says: "Therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace; to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed; not to that only which is of the law, but to that also which is of the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all." Every believer's faith, being of the same kind with Abraham's, though perhaps different in degree, is a sovereign gift from our heavenly Father, is fixed upon the Lord Jesus, and its blessings, being the subject of divine promise, are "sure to all the seed" wherever they are found. The patriarch was not merely the founder of the Jewish nation; he is the father—the chief, example, or pattern—of all believers whether among Israelites or Romans.

2d. The Abrahamic covenant was based upon free grace. Rom. iv. 2.—"For if Abraham were justified by works, he hath whereof to glory, but not before God." Mr. Noel, having conveniently separated and arranged, into two distinct covenants, the promises given to Abraham, then concludes: "Thus the blessings of the Abrahamic national covenant were promised to works; and the blessings of the Abrahamic covenant of grace were promised to faith."† We shall afterwards show that this fanciful distinction has no existence in the Word of God. Our present object is to prove, that for neither spiritual nor temporal blessings had that distinguished individual cause to "glory before God," however much in virtue and faith he might surpass his fellow-mortals. The land of Canaan was as much "a gift of

*Gal. iii. 17.

† Essay on Christian Baptism, 189.

grace," and the continued possession of it by his offspring depended as much upon their faith and obedience, as any other blessing which they enjoyed. Multitudes fell in the wilderness, and the people are now exiled from their paternal inheritance, *because of unbelief*. Hence we are told, Gal. iii. 18.—"For if the inheritance be of the law, it is no more of promise; but God gave it to Abraham by promise." The gift of Canaan which Abraham never possessed, being purely an object of faith, its uninterrupted enjoyment was inseparably connected with belief, and *every* blessing of that covenant was thus secured to the Hebrews by faith, and not by the works "of the law." In no part of the Bible is any man, however good and great, represented as having a demand upon his Maker for any blessing, spiritual or temporal, apart from the cross of Jesus. Abraham never claimed any; the apostle unqualifiedly declares he had none; Mr. Noel affirms that he had. Which is most deserving of belief? The patriarch, like a genuine believer, confessed, after he had done his utmost, that he was "an unprofitable servant," and looked to the atoning sacrifice of Christ as the only, yet all-sufficient, ground on which every blessing is obtained. The whole is thus of grace, and the promise is, therefore, made "sure to all the seed."

3d. It was confirmed by the death of the promised Messiah. Paul says, Rom. xv. 8, 9:—"Now, I say, that Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made unto the fathers: and that the Gentiles might glorify God for his mercy: as it is written, For this cause I will confess to thee among the Gentiles, and sing unto thy name." Also, Gal. iii. 16, 17:—"Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not; and to seeds, as of many; but as of one, and to thy seed, which is Christ. And this I say, that the covenant, that was confirmed before of God in Christ, the law,

which was four hundred and thirty years after, cannot disannul, that it should make the promise of none effect." There is here no profane separating into distinct and independent sections, what God had, in his infinite goodness, made essentially one blessed whole, though composed of different parts as our numerous members make "but one body." There is, however, a clear declaration that the promises to Abraham were so distinct from, and independent of, the moral and ceremonial law—also called a covenant—given to the Israelites at Sinai, that they could not be annulled by that law delivered four hundred years after the patriarch's decease. These promises, which included our Saviour, and of which circumcision was the sign, embraced spiritual blessings of the most precious description, for Abraham, for his offspring, for all "the nations of the earth," down to the latest period of time, and for the redeemed in heaven itself. Every promise to man contains in it some portion of mercy, and is based upon the merits and intercession of Immanuel. These soul-cheering truths are explicitly revealed in the above quotations. Proof could not be more decisive, that Christ was in the covenant of circumcision, was its substance, minister, and author; that this covenant, being securely confirmed "of God in Christ," could, by no created power, be made "of none effect."

4th. It contained the gospel. This might have been inferred from its including the Saviour. But, as if anticipating objections, and to preclude the possibility of a doubt, on this important subject, Paul writes in Gal. iii. 8.: "And the Scriptures, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, in thee shall all nations be blessed." This declaration should decide the question with right-minded Christians, who, without disputation, bow to the clearly revealed will of God. Surely the apostle knew what was the mind of the

Spirit in that covenant ; and if he was a competent judge, his decision cannot be mistaken. Human vocabularies could not have supplied him with terms more explicit. Notwithstanding his plain statement, and to avoid the inevitable conclusion to which it leads, namely, that infants and believers were, in death, alike saved by that gospel, Dr. Carson, to deprive children of their religious privileges, boldly affirms "that the infants of even Abraham himself were not saved, when they died in infancy, by Abraham's covenant."* On the same page, he says : "They were saved, through *the bruising of the seed* of the woman." He thus makes a distinction, where none in reality exists in the Bible, between the gospel and the promised bruising of the woman's seed, excludes both Christ and the gospel from the Abrahamic covenant, and, that he may cast children out of the church, then gravely tells us that dying infants were saved by something which that covenant did not contain ! That is, Paul teaches that Christ and the gospel were both within the terms of this covenant, and Dr. Carson advances an opposite doctrine. There must, certainly, be something essentially wrong in a system which drove a man, so acute and learned, to such unscriptural conclusions ; and we must be excused, whatever be the obloquy—in which Dr. Carson was an adept—our opponents may choose to heap upon us, if we prefer the plain instructions of the Bible, to mere human and absurd dogmas.

5th. It was permanent, "and thou shalt call his name Isaac : and I will establish my covenant with him for an everlasting covenant, and with his seed after him."† It was everlasting because its spiritual promises were enduring, and not because its rites and ceremonies were to continue. Christ was its great and previous promise ; and his spiritual blessings are, like himself, "the same yesterday, to-day, and

* Baptism, 217.

† Gen. xvii. 19.

for ever." To have Jehovah as "their God" was a pure gospel covenant of eternal grace. For this reason, the spirits of those who died in faith are now happy with him in heaven; and what he was to them, he has been, and shall be, to all the spiritual offspring of Abraham, a God whose covenant is everlasting.*

6th. It was revealed for the advantage of no particular nation, and its spiritual benefits were promised to the Gentiles. Gal. iii. 14.—"That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith." No proof here of its exclusive nationality, or its being entirely temporal and temporary. Men may teach that it was; but the Scriptures do not countenance their doctrine. "The blessing of Abraham" cannot be the possession of Canaan, which even *he* did not enjoy, and was the temporal part of the covenant, bestowed on the Hebrews alone; but it clearly was "the promise of the Spirit through faith in Jesus Christ," and included all that man requires for this life and the next. Besides, one of its leading promises was: "I will be a God unto thee." This very language is also applied by the Apostles to believing Gentiles, and even to the saints in glory.

The extensive and perpetual blessings which that covenant embraced, were thus bestowed upon all through faith, and included the pardon of sin, the purification of the soul, the resurrection of the body, with future and eternal happiness. Out of several proofs, let the following suffice:—Heb. xi. 14-16.—"For they that say such things declare plainly that they seek a country. And truly, if they had been mindful of that *country* from whence they came out, they might have had opportunity to have returned. But now they desire a better country, that is, an heavenly; wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God; for he hath prepared for them a

* Gen. xvii. 19.

city." These quotations form a specific and conclusive answer to every argument respecting the exclusive nationality, the temporal and temporary nature, of the great promises in the Abrahamic covenant. This patriarch, and the other worthies named in the preceding context, had received the promise of a Redeemer, but were not honoured to behold his incarnation ; yet, believing in his atoning sacrifice, they eagerly sought and obtained that better home prepared for Jews and Gentiles, of which the earthly Canaan was a faint type, and they "died in faith," rejoicing that Jehovah was "not ashamed to be called their God" both for time and eternity.

With these promises, so full of peace, and hope, and bliss, to adults, were the infant children of believers formerly connected by an external rite ; and we naturally demand a reply to the question, when, how, and where were they excommunicated ? The interrogation is not an idle one ; for it involves the solemn consideration, whether men, in excluding infants from their religious privileges, and casting out those whom he has brought near, do not arrogate the prerogative of God, and act contrary to his pleasure. That exclusion entails, in our estimation, a deep and awful responsibility.

In condescension to our weak capacities and proneness to forget the only source of true and lasting enjoyments, the Lord has kindly instituted, in connexion with every revealed dispensation, external and visible ordinances. These can add nothing to the intrinsic value of the doctrines contained in a believer's creed, nor can they, of themselves, impart or secure saving grace ; but as the planets, ordained "for signs, and for seasons, and for days, and years," lead man to devoutly adore the Almighty Creator, they draw the mind from other distracting objects, fix it upon heavenly things, evince our reception of sacred truths and obedience to God's laws, and thus, under the agency of the Spirit, become the instruments of spiritual good.

1st. For these purposes, circumcision was the outward act which the Lord connected with the Abrahamic covenant. We are told that it was a sign of only the temporal part of that covenant. It may be safer, however, to be guided by the Spirit of God in this important matter, than by any mere human conjecture. We again appeal to Gen. xvii. 10.—“This is my covenant, which ye shall keep, between me and you, and thy seed after thee; every man-child among you shall be circumcised.” There is not the slightest intimation here of two covenants, the one of works and the other of grace; nor that circumcision was the sign of the first, and not of the second. God gathered all his former promises under one word—“covenant,” and enjoined circumcision as the more immediate sign of its spiritual provisions, whilst sacrifice had been previously ordered as the first and proper token of the temporal part. It was reserved for modern times to separate and mar what God had joined together; though different parts of it may be spoken of in the Bible as if they were the whole, just as faith and repentance frequently are, because both are necessary to salvation.

To render ineffectual all arguments for baptism, drawn from circumcision, we are unceasingly and confidently told that a declaration of faith is indispensable from every baptized individual, and since children are incapable of making such a declaration, they must be inadmissible to the ordinance. When pressed with the fact that infants formerly enjoyed their privileges, our opponents answer, that no declaration of faith was anciently required in connection with circumcision. This statement, so contrary to Scripture, is supported by elaborate arguments, and is deemed so important by some, that they appear willing to suspend the whole case on the issue. We shall afterwards consider its full value; but we must at present give it a moment's consideration, for it stands at the very threshold of our investigation.

In Gen. xvii. 3, we read,—“ And Abraham fell on his face and worshipped.” This devout act of homage immediately preceded the institution of the rite of circumcision. Was there no confession of faith when that venerable man bowed in holy adoration at the feet of the Almighty who had, in the first verse, commanded him to walk uprightly and be perfect? The believing patriarch gave the humble confession of the spirit, as well as of the body,—gave “ the groanings of the Spirit which cannot be uttered.” This was an expression of faith made in the temple of the heart where none but God and the soul were present. And no man is justified in “ *conjecturing*” that Abraham did not, before administering the rite of circumcision, require from all his household who were capable of expressing their faith, that acknowledgment which he himself had so recently and cheerfully rendered.

Moses expounds and applies Gen. xvii. 1-10, in Deut. xxix. 9-15.—“ Keep therefore the words of this covenant, and do them, that ye may prosper in all that ye do. Ye stand this day all of you before the Lord your God ; your captains of your tribes, your elders, and your officers, with all the men of Israel ; your little ones, your wives, and thy stranger that is in thy camp, from the hewer of thy wood unto the drawer of thy water ; that thou shouldest enter into covenant with the Lord thy God, and into his oath, which the Lord thy God maketh with thee this day ; that he may establish thee to-day for a people unto himself, and that he may be unto thee a God, as he hath been unto thee, and as he hath sworn unto thy fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob. Neither with you only do I make this covenant and this oath ; but with him that standeth here with us this day before the Lord our God, and also with him that is not here with us this day.” What a solemn scene is this ! The lawgiver, the captains, the elders, the officers, the little ones, the wives, the stranger, and all the men of Israel, are

congregated to enter into holy engagement with Jehovah ; God ratifies his own oath, and requires the assembled throng publicly to record their vows of fidelity ; and, to make the spectacle yet more sublime, future generations are brought into view ! Who will now affirm that “no declaration of faith” was demanded from the circumcised of Israel ? From what page of the New Testament can a more public, extensive, and profound utterance of faith be produced ? It stands without a greater in the Bible. Let it be specially marked, that the “little ones” also form part of the vast multitude. Could they, by speech, enter into covenant with the Almighty, verbally accept of Christ the supreme blessing promised in that covenant, and, with their feeble voices, proclaim their resolve to walk in his commandments ? No : but God recognises them as his dedicated ones, graciously accepts the homage their youthful hearts could render ; and since they were, by their parents, once given up to his service, upon his own authority and by a religious ceremony, we justly ask, by whom, and by what command, explicit or implied, are they now thrown aside as unfit to be so dedicated to his homage ? We plead for their due ; they themselves are responsible for their subsequent life. No man, therefore, without a distinct injunction on the subject, should despoil them of their rights by laying a rude hand upon the ark of their privileges.

2d. The ancient connexion between parents and children, not being destroyed by the introduction of Christianity, was the subject of prophecy. Isaiah says, xlix. 22.—“Thus saith the Lord God, behold, I will lift up mine hand to the Gentiles, and set up my standard to the people : and they shall bring thy sons in their arms, and thy daughters shall be carried upon their shoulders.” The converted heathen shall be subservient to the restoration of the Jews, and shall, with a brotherly hand, bring back the youngest to long forfeited

benefits now restored. Isa. lix. 21.—“As for me, this is my covenant with them, saith the Lord ; My Spirit that is upon thee, and my words which I have put in thy mouth, shall not depart out of thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of thy seed, nor out of the mouth of thy seed’s seed, saith the Lord, from henceforth and for ever.” They were to feel and obey the same words as formerly, while the religious connection between parents and offspring was to remain unaltered and unimpaired. Isa. lxxv. 23.—“They shall not labour in vain, nor bring forth for trouble : for they are the seed of the blessed of the Lord, and their offspring with them.” This is the conclusion of a long list of most precious promises, and intimates that old and young among the Hebrews, after being re-installed in the divine favour, shall peacefully enjoy their common God, and serve him together in the means of grace.

To avoid the legitimate application of such passages, we are sometimes informed, that the word “seed” means descendants without respect to age. Certainly it does ; and this is one reason why we adduce these quotations ; but when the inference, that it does not include children, is attempted to be drawn from that fact, they might as well endeavour to infer that it applies to males and not to females. Every school-boy knows that it signifies descendants of every age, and most frequently means infants alone. It is a pity that men, in struggling to defend a system, should expose themselves to the corrections of any tyro in the Hebrew language.

So highly did the God of Abraham regard this connexion, that its continuance—as if to rebut every objection—is the subject of still more explicit predictions. Some, unacquainted with the intricacies of this controversy, may inquire, Why so urgent upon a topic so plain ? Because several of our opponents strenuously maintain, that, the ancient connexion being dissolved, parents are not now bound to present their children to God by any religious ceremony ;

that is, they are neither bound to baptize their infants, nor are these entitled to baptism. To us the subject is of vast importance, is very plain, and clearly revealed ; but some adult-baptists deny it is so, and we are anxious, if possible, to convince them of their error.

In Jer. xxx. 20-22, we read.—“ Their children also shall be as aforetime, and their congregation shall be established before me, and I will punish all that oppress them. And their nobles shall be of themselves, and their governor shall proceed from the midst of them ; and I will cause him to draw near, and he shall approach unto me : for who is this that engaged his heart to approach unto me ? saith the Lord. And ye shall be my people, and I will be your God.” In this chapter, the Israelites are assured of deliverance from captivity and restoration to their land ; they are comforted with the promise of salvation from the Lord himself, though every other source of succour should completely fail ; their children, receiving their divinely appointed rights, were to “ be as aforetime ;” and the same promise—formerly given to Abraham, and here differently expressed—that they would be his property, and He the portion of their cup, sums up and seals this catalogue of blessings.

Add to the above passage, Jer. xxxii. 37-41.—“ Behold, I will gather them out of all countries, whither I have driven them in mine anger, and in my fury, and in great wrath ; and I will bring them again unto this place, and I will cause to dwell safely : and they shall be my people, and I will be their God : and I will give them one heart, and one way, that they may fear me for ever, for the good of them, and of their children after them : and I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them, to do them good : but I will put my fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from me. Yea, I will rejoice over them to do them good, and I will plant them in this land

assuredly with my whole heart, and with my whole soul." Whatever might be the primary application of these delightful words, to the Babylonish captivity, their full realization awaits the coming and near peace of dispersed Israel. This quotation, therefore, establishes, beyond a doubt, the following points which bear upon the subject under discussion,—the perpetuity of the relationship between God and his people; the continued right of children to their privileges as in ancient days; and the solid grounds on which that continuance is based—the everlasting covenant of God, executed with his "whole heart" and "whole soul." It is surely no light matter to tamper with a connexion so firmly established by such an authority, and no party can be guiltless who gainsays what the Almighty affirms.

Jesus knew well the passages we have produced, understood their true import, and treated children with his wonted compassion, making them patterns of disposition, and examples of Christian character for the subjects of his kingdom. In his every movement he proceeded with them in his usual manner, and acted with regard to baptism, as he did with respect to the Sabbath, rightfully taking it for granted that men would understand, what is so easily comprehended in other matters, that *when a law is not abrogated, it continues in all its original force*. The Jews obviously understood this matter, and expressed no surprise when females, as a new class of persons, were admitted into the church, nor disappointment and disapprobation, as they undoubtedly would have done, had their sons been cast out. They were proud, tenacious of their customs, and would contend violently for a fast-day, a festival, or the most trivial ceremony; but on the important subject in debate, and the admission of heathen to an equality with themselves, there is neither a charge by the enemies, nor a complaint by the friends, of Jesus: all are silent as the grave. Why this universal quiet? Because there was no

reason for doubt or disputation, — these were reserved for after times. The Jews, believing and acting on the promises, expected an extension, no curtailment, of their privileges. The prophets had told them that their children should “be as aforetime;” God had taught them that he would be the inheritance of his people and their seed, as he had always been, and they believed the revelation. Both their sons and their daughters were now to be brought to the Lord, and the converted heathen were to swell the number of believers in the Messiah.

The apostles acted a similar part. Acts, ii. 38, 39.—“Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptised every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call.” Adult baptists say, that the promise is here restricted to “as many as the Lord shall call,” and since children cannot be called, they cannot be included in the promise. This is an evasion of, not an answer to, our argument. It is denied by no party, that adults are called—who alone could understand the gospel message—though it is sometimes triumphantly adduced by our opponents as if it were the whole question. The point in debate is, When an adult parent receives, and assents to, the gospel invitation, are both *he* and his *infant offspring*, as believers and their children were formerly admitted into the Church of God, entitled to the initiatory rite of the Christian Church? The above passage is decisive proof that infants are spoken of, under the Christian economy and in connexion with religious ordinances, exactly as they had been under the ancient dispensation. The apostle alludes to Gen. xii. 3.—“And in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed.” This promise was incorporated in the covenant recapitulated in Gen. xvii. 4, 7, 8.

These promises Peter here, and in Acts, iii. 25, explains and applies, "Ye are the children of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with our fathers, saying unto Abraham, and in thy seed shall all the kindreds of the earth be blessed." The same promise, which previously included Jewish infants and of which circumcision was the sign, was to both Jews and Gentiles with their children, and it consequently included the same classes of individuals—old and young; repentance and circumcision had formerly been enjoined upon both, but repentance and baptism are now required; the same blessings were to be enjoyed by both—"the remission of sins, and the gift of the Holy Ghost."

Mr. Booth and others affirm that the word "children" here means only adult posterity. It signifies both adults and infants, and is never otherwise rendered except by disputants for controversial purposes. The apostle does not limit the word to persons of mature years, and no fanciful "conjecture," which does obvious violence to the truth of inspiration, can be permitted. Peter's audience would understand him, if language has any meaning, as including children in the initiatory rite of baptism, as they had been in that of circumcision. The Lord had promised, Gen. xvii. 7, "To be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee." This was a chief article in the covenant of which circumcision, administered to adults and infants, was the sign. The same classes of persons, therefore, were to be admitted now, as had been then, to church privileges. The terms employed by Moses and Peter are of precisely the same import; and the apostle's auditors were thus manifestly taught to believe that they and their infants would be admitted by baptism, as they had been by circumcision, into the Church of Christ. Parents and children were inseparably connected in both institutions; and to prevent any misconstruction of his words, Peter gives, not only to the Jews whom he ad-

dressed and their children, the same promises and privileges which they had formerly enjoyed, but to all who might believe, wherever they lived, and he thus assured the godly of the same blessings to all succeeding generations. The same law of admission to the Church is thus perpetuated, though the mode of administration is changed,—the deed of right is continued, whilst the seal of it is altered. These are the plain instructions of the Spirit, and no man should, without express intimation from God, excommunicate any of the persons specified in the promise, or limit its application to certain ages or classes. No part of the Bible teaches that the religious connection between parents and children is dissolved, or even diminished in its original force. Such an extraordinary innovation, as the abrogation of that relationship, would have completely subverted the expectations of the Jews, to whom Judaism was emphatically a family religion, and who regarded it as merely introductory to Christianity, which was to extend, not abridge, their rights and privileges. From their illustrious progenitors, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, down to their own times, they had enjoyed, by a divine warrant, the blessings of family rites and ceremonies; they believed, upon the authority of their prophets, that their spiritual observances would be continued; and the apostle, in the above quotations, gives them the most explicit assurance that their expectations were fully realised.

3d. Circumcision had a *spiritual* meaning. This is so frequently and plainly stated in Scripture, that some, unacquainted with the details of the controversy, may wonder why it is advanced. This department of the discussion is of vital importance, and our opponents make the most strenuous efforts, though they are sorely puzzled and driven into flagrant inconsistencies, to strip of all spirituality the subjects of that ordinance. Dr. Carron confesses: "Circumcision and baptism correspond in meaning."* What more

* Baptism, 227, 228.

can we demand? But on the next page he declares, that "Circumcision had no personal reference to the individuals circumcised, is also evident from the fact, that when a stranger desired to eat the passover, all the males of the family must be circumcised." The palpable contradiction in these quotations, in which circumcision is stated to "correspond in meaning with baptism," and yet to have no personal reference to the individuals circumcised, which baptism is acknowledged to have, originates in the writer's falsely assuming that no declaration of faith was required from those circumcised. This mistake, afterwards to be noticed, pervades and vitiates a considerable portion of this author's volume. Mr. Noel says: "As circumcision was intended to signify the circumcision of the heart, the renunciation of all sin, it was enjoined upon children and servants to show that God required this renunciation of sin by all the covenanted people. It was the token that they must be a holy people to obtain his blessing; but it involved no profession of piety, and was no sign of existing religious character."* That it *did* involve a profession of piety on the part of those capable of making it, we have in part already seen. I quote the passage to show that Mr. Noel admits the spirituality of circumcision. In the same work, however, at page 177, he adds: "But to become a citizen of that nation required no more spirituality than to become a citizen of England." How a rite can be spiritual and yet require no spirituality in the subject of it, seeing that a rite is spiritual just because it does require that spirituality; how it could signify the circumcision of the heart, the renunciation of sin, or be a token of holiness, and not require the things it symbolized, are perplexing inconsistencies which he has not explained. He might as well affirm that baptism, though it represents the washing away of sins, the descent of the spirit upon the soul,

* Essay on Christian Baptism, 173.

and the new birth in Christ Jesus, does not require, in the subjects of it, the things which it prefigures. These writers seem to forget that every divine ordinance, having its spiritual meaning and lessons, is instituted for the express purpose of inculcating these upon mankind, and to assert that it does not require both spirituality and a confession of faith in the subjects of it, to the full extent of their ability, is virtually to proclaim it destitute of all *practical* signification,—is to despoil it of both “spirit and power.”

It is sometimes asked, with a smile of pity for our weak faith, “What do children understand of baptism?” and we know the influence which this interrogation has with many, who are satisfied with a puzzle for a supposed argument. We might inquire, in return, What does any man know of the process by which the Spirit sanctifies the soul, and of which baptism is a symbol? If our creed and practice must be limited to what we fully understand, they will be narrow indeed. If ignorance of the rite must exclude children, ignorance of that which the rite signifies must exclude us all. But the question is, What doth the Lord teach upon the subject? Besides, circumcision was as spiritual as baptism, even according to the admissions of our opponents, and to deny children, therefore, a religious privilege because they do not completely comprehend its import, is a virtual impeachment of the infinite wisdom of the head of the Church.

Amidst this conflicting of opinions, these contradictions and suppositions of disputants, it may be profitable to ascertain the truth from the Scriptures. It is necessary to remember that circumcision, which was the seal, sign, or token of the Abrahamic covenant, and to which children were admitted, includes, of course, all that the covenant contained.

1st. Its meaning, when originally instituted. Deut. x. 15,

16.—“Only the Lord had a delight in thy fathers to love thee, and he chose their seed after them, even you above all people, as it is this day ; circumcise, therefore, the foreskin of your heart, and be no more stiff-necked.” Circumcision, in being thus applied to the soul, is merely another term for regeneration, and the exhortation of Moses is another expression for our Saviour’s declaration, “Except a man be born of water, and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.” But the same idea is more fully recorded by this writer in Deut. xxx. 6.—“And the Lord thy God will circumcise thine heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, that thou mayest live.” Has not circumcision here both a spiritual meaning, and a spiritual application ? What more could be said of baptism ? Nor is there the slightest notice that circumcision was one thing to the adults and another to the children ; whilst we have the most conclusive evidence that it was *not* the sign of carnal blessings alone.

2d. The same meaning was kept before the people’s minds by the prophets. The phrase, “the foreskin of the heart,” is synonymous with human depravity ; and hence the wicked are “uncircumcised in heart :” the circumcision of the heart is the renovation of it, which is so necessary to our loving God, and is his own work. Jeremiah, iv. 4, says—“Circumcise yourselves to the Lord, and take away the foreskins of your hearts, ye men of Judah and Jerusalem ; lest my fury come forth like fire, and burn that none can quench it, because of the evil of your doings.” This passage is clear proof again of the spiritual import of circumcision, and that church discipline, as rigid in its nature and awful in its penalties as any found in the New Testament, was connected with that rite. We are frequently told the contrary of all this, though the word of God is so explicit, and repeats the truth in various forms. In virtue of that covenant made with Abra-

ham, with which infants of eight days old became formally connected, the people and their children possessed the land of Canaan, with their religious privileges; but when they apostatised from their Maker, and violated their circumcision obligations, they were cast out from both temporal and spiritual enjoyments. In other words, the Lord's fury, like an unquenchable flame, consumed them "because of the evil of their doings." Nothing more strict and terrible is said of baptised individuals.

3. The same idea is conveyed into the New Testament, whose writers inform us fully what circumcision meant. They do not profess what is new; they only tell us, upon Scriptural authority, what was known of old. They are safer guides, too, than suppositions and conjectures founded on partial views of Bible truth. Paul writes, Rom. ii. 28, 29. — "For he is not a Jew which is one outwardly: neither is that circumcision which is outward in the flesh. But he is a Jew which is one inwardly: and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God." Circumcision was thus of no avail unless accompanied with the personal application of saving grace: it was the sign of that righteousness which every believer has who trusts in Christ, as Abraham did: it was a confirmation of that righteousness which he had obtained by faith, and not simply of that faith, and it was consequently a seal of righteousness to all who, like Abraham, should believe. As a sign, therefore, it denoted, as much as baptism does, the grace of God in the heart, enabling it to have no confidence in the flesh, to love God, and to worship him in spirit and in truth; whilst, as a seal, it applies to the righteousness of Christ, by which we are justified, or, to use a Scriptural phrase, to "the righteousness which is by faith." Hence the apostle adds, in Phil. iii. 3.— "For we are the circumcision, which worship God in the

spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh."

Circumcision is thus made, by indisputable authority, and notwithstanding all ungrounded assumptions to the contrary, co-extensive, in its meaning and application, with the entire spiritual blessings of the Abrahamic covenant, of which the Gospel in the New Testament is only a republication and enlargement. That rite, therefore, to which both infants and adult believers were admitted, embraces, in its wide range of spiritual acceptance, divine mercy to pardon and grace to help, the Spirit to sanctify and Jesus to redeem, the consolations of saving love upon earth and eternal bliss in heaven. What more *can* baptism signify? Since God has so exalted that ordinance, let no man, for any party or sectarian purposes, degrade it by separating it from the whole covenant and attaching it to a part, by stripping it of spiritual application and reducing it to a token of mere temporal, national, and temporary objects. And if children participated of old in a spiritual ordinance initiatory into the Church of God, a similar enjoyment cannot be wrested from them now, by human conjectures, but by divine authority; and until that explicit warrant is vouchsafed, we are bound, if we would revere the whole will of God, to make Jacob's offspring, as the prophet foretold they would be, "Their children also shall be as aforetime."

4th. Circumcision has given place to baptism. I know the feelings which, in some minds, this announcement will awaken. Dr. Carson styles it, "a most groundless figment,"* and maintains that, to establish our position, "every Jewish ordinance is equally entitled to a substitute and successor."† This is one of those unguarded assertions so abundant in his writings. Our Saviour and his apostles surely knew what of Mosiac ordinances, having accomplished their purposes, and

* Baptism, 228.

† Ibid, 229.

being fulfilled in Him to whom they pointed, should be abolished, and succeeded by better institutions. The blessings of regeneration, which were formerly symbolized by circumcision, are continued under the new dispensation, and represented to our senses by baptism. The matter and form of the two ordinances may differ, but their spiritual import is the same ; and circumcision, having found its full meaning in baptism, has evidently made way for the Christian rite. The Jewish Sabbath has given place to "the Lord's Day ;" the Jewish passover is removed for the supper of Christ, who is "our Passover ;" and since the circumcision of Abraham, by which believers were formerly admitted into the Church of God, is now substituted by the circumcision of Christ, as the initiatory rite into the Christian church, it is rather a serious charge against our Saviour, to call the change "a most groundless figment."

We are said to found baptism on circumcision. This is a misrepresentation ; for the former rests upon the latter, no more than the day is based upon the night which precedes it. We establish baptism upon the authority of Jesus, who claims the indisputable right of modifying and altering his own institutions according to his sovereign pleasure. Circumcision existed until he chose to favour his people with another ordinance, which serves the same purpose and is equally applicable to both sexes. Our simple conclusion is, that believers, being formerly admitted into the Church of God by the one rite, are now received by the other.

Others inform us, that we found the baptism of a child on the faith of the parent. This statement is incorrect. When an inheritance is left by will to an individual, the expressed law of the land authorizes him to take possession, and defends him in his property ; but his claim rests upon the will, not upon the law. So, the expressed faith of the parent may warrant the administration of the rite to both himself and

his infant offspring, but the Bible, not his faith, is our authority for that administration ; his faith is merely the channel through which the child enjoys its privilege ordained of God.

Baptism, having succeeded circumcision, makes us, in a spiritual sense, the seed of Abraham, and heirs of the promises of the covenant which God made with the patriarch. He is therefore the father of all believers, whether circumcised or baptized, and we are still the Israel of God. Gal. iii. 26, 27, 29.—“ For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ, have put on Christ. And if ye be Christ’s, then are ye Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise.” By faith in Christ, we become the children of God ; by baptism, after a declaration of that faith, we assume our Redeemer’s name, trust in him for salvation, put on his moral image, walk in his footsteps, and having thus received him in love, we are “ Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise.” We can be his seed, not by possessing the land of Canaan, nor being introduced into the ancient economy, but by enjoying—in kind though perhaps not in degree—the same faith. We then become his spiritual offspring ; and since the promise is to us and our children, as it was to him and his infant descendants, we claim the like privileges for ourselves and “ little ones,” which were formerly granted. As circumcision, therefore, was administered to believers and their families, we rightfully demand a similar comprehensive administration of baptism to believers and their households, for the promise of grace and salvation, with the sign of them, is to us and our children, as much as at any former period of the world’s history. The administration of both ordinances has been ordained to the extent of their respective economies ; and since Christianity makes no distinction of sexes, both male and female are entitled to baptism.

Baptism has abolished circumcision. It is of the utmost importance to adult-baptists to prove, that this proposition is erroneous ; but they cannot succeed without setting aside the express declarations of Scripture. Hence their lengthened and laborious endeavours to prove what the Bible does *not* mean, rather than what it *does* signify. We are told, "There, rose up certain of the sect of the Pharisees which believed, saying, that it was needful to circumcise them, and to command them to keep the law of Moses. And the apostles and elders came together for to consider of this matter."* In this assembly, Peter said, 10th verse.—"Now therefore why tempt ye God, to put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples, which neither we nor our fathers were able to bear?" The ordinances of a prior dispensation were thus laid aside ; and the disciples, having been baptized with their households, were not to be circumcised. Should they return to these ordinances, they would forfeit the blessings of the gospel. Hence we read, Gal. v. 2-6.—"Behold, I Paul say unto you, that if ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing. For I testify again to every man that is circumcised, that he is a debtor to do the whole law. Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law ; ye are fallen from grace. For we through the Spirit wait for the hope of righteousness by faith. For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision ; but faith which worketh by love." He adds, vi. 15 — "For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature." An internal circumcision was thus indispensable to make them the seed of Abraham, according to the promise, and full heirs of the blessings of the covenant. The apostle's view of that institution is very different from the degrading notions of our opponents : he declares it makes the individual "a debtor to do

* Acts, xv. 5, 6.

the whole law," and to return to it would annul his interest in Christ. In his estimation, it is no mere carnal ordinance, but is full of spiritual import ; yet infants enjoyed this rite, though they were entirely ignorant of the nature of its solemn obligations, and could give no expression of their faith and submission ! That infants were circumcised is a fact ; and that circumcision made an individual " a debtor to do the whole law," is another fact ; but as infants could not become such debtors, it is evident there was something in circumcision, which did not apply to infants ; and, if their inability to confess must exclude them from baptism, their inability to become debtors must have excluded them from circumcision. What a consolation, then, that we can turn from the depreciating and sophistical arguments of disputants, to the plain and expressive words of divine truth !

By the above passages, circumcision is demonstrated to have been a seal of the covenant of grace ; and the new seal which, bearing the same signification, has displaced it, must, upon the same authority, be administered to infants.

In Col. ii. 11, 12, Paul says :—" In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ ; buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead." We remark at present on these words, that the apostle's subject of conversation was regeneration, which he styles the " putting off the body of sins." Of this change, circumcision was formerly the sign, when " the circumcision made without hands" was, for man's salvation, as necessary and fully promised as it is now. That indispensable blessing is continued under the new dispensation, and baptism is its appropriate symbol. The two ordinances are therefore equally significant of a spiritual change in the state of the soul ; and since the one initiatory

rite has ceased, and the other been substituted in its room, the conclusion is unavoidable,—without express and divine authority to the contrary,—that the same persons are entitled to baptism, to whom circumcision was administered.

Both ordinances had thus, with the apostle, the same meaning; both were introductory to the Church; and both were solemn dedications to God. Children received the one, which was a spiritual and public institution, and they cannot, by mere human suppositions, be deprived of the other, which, being also spiritual and public, is conferred by the same authority.

It might have been supposed that a subject, so simple and clearly revealed, would never, by any professing to adopt the Scriptures as a standard of faith and rule of practice, have been controverted. But it is the fate of the Bible to be denied by enemies, and misrepresented by some of its friends. We shall, therefore, glance at the principal of the false arguments of our opponents, and which are deemed conclusive against infant baptism as succeeding the ordinance of circumcision.

1st. Adult-baptists divide the Abrahamic covenant into two distinct parts. Mr. Noel, advancing further than Mr. M'Lean, says:—"Thus the promises made to Abraham contained two distinct covenants, the one made with his natural posterity, the other with his spiritual posterity; the one left its subjects in bondage, the other led its subjects to adoption; the one furnished temporal advantages and means of instruction, the other secured salvation; the one was a conditional legal covenant, the other was an unconditional covenant of grace. His spiritual posterity, as such, had no part in the first of these covenants; his natural posterity, as such, had no part in the second." "Thus, the blessings of the Abrahamic national covenant were promised to works; and the blessings of the Abrahamic covenant of grace were

promised to faith.”* This favourite distinction is old, and, were it true, its age might claim for it veneration : but it has no foundation in Scripture, and is merely an ingenious device for defending a system. Having assumed that his hypothesis is well-founded, the author has, of course, a wide field for descanting upon the impropriety of infant baptism ; and he does not perceive that his lectures are entirely inapplicable, because his position is untenable. In the passages which he quotes, and especially Gal. iii. 8, 9, 10, the apostle is speaking of the law, and *not* of a divided Abrahamic covenant ; of the necessity of faith, that the believing Galatians might, along with faithful Abraham, participate in the blessings of the gospel preached to the patriarch by the promise, “In thee shall all nations be blessed ;” of the folly, danger, and sin, of trusting to the law as a ground of acceptance with God ; and of all being under the curse of the law, who disjoin it from the Abrahamic covenant, and make it the grounds on which any temporal comfort, or the Spirit, or salvation, could be obtained. He is not comparing any one part of that covenant with another ; but is contrasting faith in Jesus with confiding in the law of Moses, which was delivered 430 years after the promises to Abraham were announced. His subject of discourse, in this chapter, is justification by grace, which had been, from the beginning, the doctrine of the word of God. He selects, for illustration, the case of Abraham, in whom the Jews were wont to glory, and proves that even he was justified, not by either the ceremonial or moral law, given to Moses—and also styled “covenants”—but by faith in promises delivered long before either of these covenants was *formally* in existence, though the substance of them had, for ages, been previously known. He thus conclusively proves, that the promise of grace to Abraham, to which promise circumcision was

* Essay on Christian Baptism, 187, 189.

annexed, was entirely distinct, in point of time and character, from the laws of Moses. He, therefore, warns *against* the above division, or trusting to any covenant of works for a blessing, and thus teaches directly the opposite of what adult-baptists would induce us to believe.

Throughout the whole Bible there is not the slightest hint of the division for which our opponents contend, and which is so necessary to their cause—the excluding of children from the church of Christ. Hypocrites and legalists were found in the Jewish Church ; and our worthy friends, forgetting that God bore with them whilst he condemned their conduct, or that they continued to enjoy religious privileges because the officials failed to execute the laws which provided for their expulsion, *suppose* that the nation, and the Church existing in it, were distinct communities. It would be equally unsound and unscriptural to maintain that back-sliding adult-baptists are the British nation, and their genuine members are the Church in that nation ! No support to this fancied distinction can be found in the Old Testament, and an appeal is made to the New. The proof, commonly adduced, is Gal. iv. 22-31. The apostle here compares their privileges, as believing descendants of Isaac, the child of promise and of the free woman, with the want of these privileges by the offspring of Ishmael, the child of a bondwoman. Instead of dividing the Abrahamic covenant, as our opponents assert he does, he merely institutes a comparison between that covenant and the law of Moses ; he contrasts the earthly Jerusalem, then in bondage, with the celestial city, and thus concludes :—“ So then, brethren, we are not children of the bondwoman, but of the free.” They were under grace, and not under the law, as a ground of justification ; they enjoyed privileges which the unbelieving Jews despised, who, trusting to a covenant of works distinct from the gospel announced to Abraham, had reduced the earthly

Jerusalem to bondage, and who, by oppressing the Christians—the believing seed of the patriarch—were symbolised by Ishmael who persecuted Isaac. But there was this consolation for the saints, that Jerusalem above, of which they were citizens, and of which the Church on earth was a type, could be reduced to bondage by none. There is not one word in the whole passage, therefore, of a distinction between the nation and the ancient Church of God, nor of a divided Abrahamic covenant from one part of which Christ was excluded. But there is decisive proof that the converted Galatians and believing Jews were alike “the children of promise,” and that they, with their infant offspring, were consequently entitled to all the privileges of the Church of Christ, as the children of promise formerly were. The passage is against both the above distinction and the exclusion of children from the Church.

The apostle does more than not divide the Abrahamic covenant. He introduces the law of Moses, but it is to reprove the Hebrews for their abuse of that law which, in all their generations, should have led them to the Messiah as the only Mediator, and not to trust in it for salvation, or any blessing temporal or spiritual. He, therefore, condemns the unbelieving Jews for reposing in the law that trust which had reduced them to a bondage from which faith alone could deliver. Hagar is, indeed, in the allegory, the representative of the Sinaitic covenant, and Sarah of the promise of mercy through a Redeemer. Hagar does not, however, represent the law given at Sinai, as it was intended by the Lawgiver, but as understood and explained by the rebellious Jews in the apostle’s times. These unfaithful Israelites interpreted that law as opposing, not conducting to, the Gospel ; as a covenant of works, securing needed blessings to the obedient who claimed a recompense for their labours ; and not as teaching man’s inability to keep, in spirit and truth, a law so holy,

just, and good ; not as teaching that neither repentance, prayers, pious resolutions, nor any good deed, could entitle the sinner to demand pardon and acceptance with God, without an atonement for guilt, offered according to the law. The law, so far from being a covenant of works for obtaining, by itself, *any* spiritual or temporal good, made every man a sinner, passed on him a sentence of condemnation, and effectually excluded all dependence on works of righteousness for reconciliation with his Maker, shutting "him up unto the faith,"* and teaching him that, to be sanctified, accepted, and saved, "the just shall live by faith."† This is the opposite of the dangerous doctrine advocated by our opponents, that "the blessings of the Abrahamic national covenant were promised to works."

Did Ishmael prefigure those to whom the law was given at Sinai, and who were under the law before Christ, he would be upon an equality with Isaac, for both of them were then under that law ;§ but, in this allegory, Ishmael merely represents the unbelieving Jews, who were the children of that Jerusalem which, in the days of Paul, persecuted the seed of the free-woman, as Hagar's son had troubled Sarah's. Abraham was required "to walk before God and be perfect,"‡ before the law, which could demand no more than perfection from man, was promulgated at Sinai. The law and the gospel were thus really and inseparably connected by divine authority, when the promises were delivered to the patriarch and sealed by the rite of circumcision. Sarah, therefore,—the promise and the law together, and not Hagar, answered to the Jerusalem which was *before* Christ ; but the apostate Jews separated what God had originally joined, exalting the law into the place of the gospel, and Hagar thus answered "to Jerusalem which *now* is, and is in bondage with her children." The perverse Hebrews thus con-

* Gal. iii. 23. † Hab. ii. 4. § Gal. iv. 1-4. ‡ Gen. xvii. 1

verted the law into a "national covenant of works," thereby bringing Jerusalem into bondage, and are condemned by the apostle for doing the very thing for which our opponents plead. It is a blessing that, in the midst of the vituperation with which we are visited by some adult-baptists, we can turn from their false expositions of Scripture, to the pure and simple word of God.

2d. They connect circumcision with only the temporal part of the Abrahamic covenant. On this department of the subject, there is a perplexing diversity among our opponents. Mr. Booth confessed that he could not deprive children of all participation in the religious privileges of the Jewish economy. This concession, so fatal to their cause, was found to be awkward, and our later adversaries have adopted the expeditious method of solving the difficulty, by never permitting infants to enter the Church. Dr. Carson, when answering Dr. Wardlaw on the religious connexion formerly existing between parents and children, boldly asserts,—“I cut it off by showing that it never existed.”* This excision is more consistent with adult-baptist principles, but is so much the more unscriptural. Indeed, those of the party who observe the seventh day as a Sabbath, deny the validity of our baptism, regard us as forming no portion of the Church of Christ, exclude us from the Lord’s table, will permit us neither to exhort, pray, preach, nor even sing a hymn in the public services of God’s house, are the most consistent; but their exclusion is proportionally unsound. Granting their fancied superiority, they have yet to learn the precept, “Let the strong bear with the weak,” whilst perhaps few need more forbearance than themselves.

Mr. M’Lean says, in his 7th letter to Mr. Glas,—“The fleshly birth sufficiently distinguished the subjects of circumcision.” “To partake of this privilege, it was necessary they

* Baptism, 217.

should be the fleshly seed of Abraham." This is as opposed to the truth as the former mistake, and evinces the difficulties which beset their system. The fleshly birth did *not* sufficiently distinguish the subjects of that rite ; and to partake of that privilege, it was *not* necessary they should be the fleshly seed of Abraham. Our conclusive proof is the following. The steward of Abraham's household, Eliezer of Damascus, with all his fellow-servants, whether born in the house or hired with money, not *one* of whom was descended from the patriarch, were, by divine appointment, circumcised at the same time with himself. He had 318 able-bodied men, trained for war, who, with their children, and all the sons of the strangers under his charge, submitted to the ordinance. At every period of the history of the Jewish Church, Gentiles were, after professing their faith in the God of Abraham, likewise admitted with their infant children to religious ordinances ; and so numerous did they become, that a court, the largest connected with the temple, was allotted to these worshippers. All the nations of the earth, with perhaps the exception of Amalek and a few others, might have enjoyed the same privilege. If the result of modern researches into ancient records be trustworthy, circumcision was not even of Abraham : it existed as sacrifices did before his birth ; it was practised by several surrounding nations, as the Egyptians, Ethiopians, and others ; but surely this did not constitute *them* the fleshly seed of Abraham. Like the rainbow to Noah, sacrifices and the Sabbath to the Jews, it was merely set apart for a special purpose to a particular people. It thus required neither fleshly descent from Abraham, nor did it distinguish his seed. How can any man affirm, in opposition to these indubitable facts, that "To partake of this privilege, it was necessary they should be the fleshly seed of Abraham !" It is singular that men, honest in most other matters, should

unwittingly thus trample on the plainest historical evidence, and abuse individuals who cannot adopt their untruths.

The same writer again says, that circumcision "was a sign or token of a right to the temporal promise, or inheritance of Canaan." This is equally unsound as his former statement. Our opponents forget, that sacrifice, and *not* circumcision, was the first and proper sign of "the temporal promise." In that land Abraham had no inheritance, except the cave of Machpelah which he bought. If circumcision, therefore, was a sign of only a "temporal promise," it was to him the sign of what he never personally received! On the other hand, Ishmael—Abraham's fleshly seed—and Esau, the brother of Israel, were both circumcised, yet God excluded both, with all their posterity, from every temporal benefit of the covenant of Abraham. Neither the servants, nor the multitudes of proselytes, had any portion in the land; yet all these might enjoy the religious ordinances connected with that covenant, which is incontrovertible evidence that circumcision was a sign or token of spiritual, and *not* exclusively of temporal privileges.

Mr. M'Lean also states:—"It (circumcision) belonged to the temporal promise." This, though unsupported by Scripture, is a stronghold with our opponents, to which they constantly resort, and to which we solicit special attention. The original grant of Canaan is recorded in Gen. xii. 1, when God called Abraham from the home of his fathers. The promise is repeated in the 7th verse, when the patriarch was in the land, and his frail tent pitched before Shechem. On neither of these occasions do we read of circumcision; but on the latter, Abraham reared an humble altar for sacrifice and divine worship. The promise was repeated in Gen. xv. 18.,—"Unto thy seed have I given this land;" and the boundaries being minutely marked out, the time of taking possession was specified. Of this grant, Abraham, in the 8th

verse, *desired a token*. A *sacrifice* was the prescribed sign, and circumcision was never mentioned ! Sacrifice, then, and *not* circumcision, was the first and proper sign that “belonged to the temporal promise.” In Gen. xvii. 1-11, we have the various particulars or promises, of which this covenant consisted, enumerated, and circumcision is the ordained sign of the whole. The promise of the land, of which sacrifice was the token, and the promise of a numerous natural offspring, were subordinate parts of the covenant. The spiritual promise by which all nations were to be blessed in the patriarch, and of which circumcision was the proper seal, was the richest bequest in the covenant. This is explained by Paul, Rom. iv. 11-17, in terms sufficiently explicit. Abraham “received the sign of circumcision, that he might be the father of all them that believe, whether circumcised or uncircumcised, who is the father of us all ; as it is written, I have made thee a father of many nations.” The special promise, of which circumcision was the token, was to all believers : these are the seed which shall inherit the whole earth, for it is given to the righteous, and *not* to his carnal offspring. This was the very covenant of which Christ was the surety and the head ; for justifying righteousness, which is the greatest blessing of the gospel, was, we are assured, preached to the patriarch, and of which—being called “the blessing of Abraham”—believing Gentiles partook. This is the promise,—“the everlasting covenant,”—which remains unaltered by the lapse of years, which embraces the glorious gospel, which received a partial fulfilment in the days of Paul, which never waxeth old, which shall be more fully accomplished when the inhabitants of the world shall become Abraham’s spiritual seed, which shall be completely realized in heaven, and shall form there the subject of adoration through eternity itself ! How ungenerous, then, to degrade circumcision to the sign of a mere temporal and

temporary possession, and that for the unkind purpose of casting children out of the church of the benign Redeemer, and virtually consigning them to the wicked one !

3d. They assert the strange dogma, that children are not saved by the new covenant. Their dissertations here are painful expositions of Scripture ; for they make distinctions where God has made none, and sadly confound things that are distinct. Dr. Carson does say that children, dying in infancy, can be saved by "the covenant of redemption between the Father and the Son ;"* but he elsewhere tells us : "INFANTS ARE NOT SAVED BY THE NEW COVENANT," &c.† What he means by the atonement of Christ, by the gospel, and by the new covenant, he does not inform us ; nor does he tell us clearly wherein they agree and differ. He makes faith to be identical with the new covenant ; and, dividing salvation by grace into an old and a new covenant, he excludes infants from the latter, because they cannot believe. Now, the Bible teaches, and we have been accustomed to believe, that only one method has ever existed for the salvation of all mankind ; that this method is as ancient as the first announcement of mercy to our fallen race ; that the word "gospel" comprehends all the essential parts of this method ; that it has been uniformly the same, though increasing light has been thrown upon it at different periods ; and that it is unaltered by the new institutions and ordinances by which it is accompanied and held up before men. We did believe that, in the purposes of infinite and eternal mercy, Christ had virtually suffered "from the foundation of the world ;" that Christ was the minister of circumcision to the patriarchs and their offspring ; that his atonement was as efficacious, and as necessary, for redeeming the souls of old and young, *before* it was offered, as it is now *after* it has been actually presented ; that there is only one mediator between God and

* Baptism, 216.

† Ibid. 215.

man ; and that there is no other name given under heaven among men whereby we must be saved.* Why does Dr. Carson, in opposition to the plain instructions of the Bible, call this redemption a new covenant ? Simply because adults are saved "by the truth believed,"† as if belief was not as necessary in ancient times as it is now, and as if an individual, the moment he denied the faith of Abraham, did not forfeit, both for himself and his infant offspring, every claim to Canaan and religious privileges. And then he talks indignantly of its being "A vulgar mistake of theologians to consider, that if infants are saved, they must be saved by the new covenant. Theologians have manifested a great want of discrimination on this subject."‡ Such language is deeply humbling, and proves the means which even he was compelled to adopt to support an unsound creed. Nearly one sixth of his volume of 500 pages is occupied with, "absurd, foolish, childish, fools, blasphemy, awful sentiment, &c.," when speaking of such men as Beecher, Dwight, Henderson, Ewing, Bickersteth, and Wardlaw ; and he afterwards discourses complacently of his own "most impartial examination."§ Can there be any thing in the system that imbues its adherents with such self-conceit, and supercilious contempt for others ?

He adds, page 216, "The new covenant knows nothing of salvation but through faith." Nor does the Bible know of any other salvation ; a difference is made only by disputants. We have hitherto thought that faith was anciently as indispensable to salvation as it is now ; that Abel and all the patriarchs "died in faith ;" that "without shedding of blood there is no remission ;"|| and that the Scriptures spoke truly, and universally, when they said : "Without faith it is impossible to please God."** But it seems that both the Bible and we have been wrong. Dr. Carson may have discovered something new ; but "the good old paths" are better ; for they are of God and

* Acts, iv. 12.

† Baptism, 215.

‡ Ibid. 215.

§ Ibid. 237.

|| Heb. ix. 22.

** Heb. xi. 6.

not of man. Why, then, does he devise such an outrageous exposition of Scripture? Because, without it, he could not satisfactorily exclude children from the religious privilege of baptism, and cast them out of the Church of Christ!

4th. They assume that the promises of the Abrahamic covenant were exclusively external and conditional. On this part of the subject, they are far from being unanimous. Mr. Noel says, "The Abrahamic national covenant was conditional with respect to the external blessings which alone it secured." "The national covenant promised external blessings, the covenant of grace all spiritual blessings of Christ; the one was conditional, the other was absolute."* The author here, taking it for granted that his division of it into two parts is Scriptural, asserts that the blessings of the national covenant were conditional. But Dr. Carson declares: "As the promises of the Abrahamic covenant were all unconditional, they must have been fulfilled to every individual interested in them."† Which of these teachers, who differ so widely upon an essential point, are we to follow? Neither of them. We prefer the plain statements of Scripture to the contradictory assumptions of any class. The Bible does not divide that covenant; sacrifice, and *not* circumcision, was the original and proper token of the temporal promise, which was merely a subordinate portion of the covenant; to the spiritual part, called by Mr. Noel, "the covenant of grace," circumcision, now succeeded by baptism, was the appropriate seal; Christ's atonement is the exclusive ground on which any blessing, temporal or spiritual, is bestowed, for our sins are pardoned and lives prolonged through his sacrifice and intercession;‡ through faith alone in his name do believers, in every age, lawfully receive "the children's bread"—time with its comforts, and eternity with its glorious anticipations: the continued possession of Canaan,

* Essay, &c., 157, 165. † Baptism, 224. ‡ John ii. 1; Luke xiii. 8, 9.

therefore, depended as much upon obedience and faith, as the continuance of spiritual blessings. All the blessings of that covenant, spiritual and temporal, were promised only to those who believed and obeyed; whilst those who did not believe perished in the wilderness, and never entered the land; or were visited by famine, pestilence, and the sword, as punishments for their infidelity; or were exiled from Canaan, and thus deprived of both "the goodly inheritance" and church privileges. The Bible knows nothing of a divided Abrahamic covenant, one part conditional, the other unconditional; it is equally ignorant of man's receiving any blessing, except as a free and sovereign gift through Jesus Christ; "For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things: to whom be glory for ever."*

It is also said:—"This covenant with the nation was so far from being identical with the covenant of grace, that it is expressly contrasted with it."† If this be true, then grace is not to be found in the Bible. That it contained temporal and external blessings, along with spiritual ones, is cheerfully confessed; and that the Christian "has the promise of the life that now is," as well as of the next,‡ is also frankly acknowledged. But who, except an over-zealous partisan, would attempt to make these temporal and spiritual promises essentially distinct, and place them in hostile opposition to each other? Along with the Messiah, promised to Abraham and his seed, temporal, spiritual, and heavenly blessings were kindly granted; and the patriarch engaged to walk before God and be perfect: yet all was of grace.

But the Lord had said: "I will be your God," which formed the chief article in that covenant, and which John tells us, in Rev. xxi. 3, was continued to the saints in the new heaven and the new earth, securing the happiness and glory of celestial rest itself, which can be obtained by no

* Rom. xi. 36.

† Essay on Chris. Bap., 157.

‡ 1st Tim. iv. 8.

other covenant than that of grace. That sublime and comprehensive expression, embracing an assurance that God would be the endless portion of the faithful, the above writer affirms, p. 156, "could mean no more than that he would be the object of worship in that nation, and their protector, involving no promise of pardon, renewal, or salvation. It was a covenant of external blessings, not a covenant of grace." Then this worship, so dishonouring to his name, could not be established by the Lord. Are we to believe that the Almighty, who requires all "to worship him in spirit and in truth," would either enjoin, or accept, this strange homage ascribed to him by Mr. Noel, which the Bible uniformly condemns? Will he accept, like a dumb idol, the adoration of the lip, the bending of the knee, the kissing of the hand, whilst the heart wanders after its covetousness? His first demand on every worshipper is, "Give me thine heart,"—the living, breathing, humble, penitent, and believing aspirations of the soul. The uniform language of inspiration is,—“O worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness; fear before him all the earth.* Exalt the Lord our God, and worship at his holy hill; for the Lord our God is holy.† Holiness becometh thine house, O Lord, for ever.”‡ He repeatedly complained, in bitter terms, “Thou servedst not the Lord thy God with joyfulness, and with gladness of heart, for the abundance of all things.|| Thou hast not cried unto me with thine heart.”§ Such is the pure worship which he demands from all.

We are gravely told that this worship “involved no pardon, &c.” For what purposes, then, were the Israelites besought to approach Jehovah? The prophet supplies the answer. “Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abun-

* Ps. xcvi. 9. † Ps. xcix. 9. ‡ Ps. xciii. 5. || Deut. xxviii. 47.

§ Hos. vii. 14.

dantly pardon." "Even them will I bring to my holy mountain, and make them joyful in my house of prayer; their burnt-offerings and their sacrifices shall be accepted upon mine altar; for my house shall be called an house of prayer for all people."* At the dedication of the temple, Solomon prayed, when either the Israelite or stranger should cry towards that holy edifice,—“Hear thou from thy dwelling-place, even from heaven; and when thou hearest, forgive.”† There was no less spirituality required in the service of the Old, than in that of the New Testament. There was, as there is, “with God plenteous redemption”—mercy to pardon and grace to help; but “Thus saith the Lord God; I will yet for this be enquired of by the house of Israel, to do it for them.”‡ It is a pity that the Scriptures should be so wronged, and Jehovah’s worship debased, by stripping it of spirituality, that children may be cast beyond the pale of the Church! Yet such are the extremities to which our antagonists are driven.

We are likewise told: “It was a covenant of external blessings.” If this be correct, the apostles are wrong; for the covenant in Gen. xvii. is the very one which they most frequently quote as proving it contained spiritual blessings. Has this the appearance of its consisting of mere external promises? The Scriptures and our opponents are thus opposed to each other on every point. The Lord was to be the God of Abraham and his offspring; pardon, grace, regeneration, the Spirit, heaven, and Christ, were in that covenant. Were *these* only external blessings? If they were, no promises in the Bible contain spiritual, internal, and endless joys. Grace—divine and sovereign—was as much the sum and substance of that covenant, in both its temporal and spiritual provisions, as in the gracious words,—“Lo! I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. That where I am, there ye may be also.”

* Isa. lv. 7, lvi. 7.

† II Chron. vi. 21.

‡ Ezek. xxxvi. 37.

5th. They assume that no confession of faith was required in connexion with circumcision. This mistake, already noticed, is a gratuitous supposition, which, since children can make no confession, affords an excellent opportunity for declaiming against infant baptism. Our opponents treat this subject in language approaching to presumption. "Circumcision was appointed for unregenerate as well as for regenerate adults, baptism for the regenerate alone."* The word "adult" is here unfortunate, as it conveys only the half of the truth, and creates a suspicion that the author inclines to exclude male *infants* from both circumcision and baptism. His opinion, however, is, that an institution which the apostles declare embraced Christ with all his blessings, was ordained "for unregenerate"! We may well rejoice that this is not the doctrine of the sacred volume; but Oh! what a prostitution of a divinely appointed ordinance! Hypocrites and profane, who might be in the Jewish Church, were there contrary to law, or because of God's forbearance and mercy; yet he no more ordained circumcision for them, as such, than he created the sun and moon for the express purpose of shining on the abandoned, who torture his long-sparing goodness into an argument for his non-existence. Every law of God is holy, just, and good, requires purity in its subjects, and is intended to make them holy, though men may convert the blessing into a curse. "No previous instruction was ordained, no profession required, no examination instituted, no delay allowed." "Ignorant as well as instructed, good or bad, godly or ungodly, all were to be circumcised."† So say our opponents. What a sink of confusion and impurity circumcision must have been in their estimation, though an institution of a Being who cannot look upon sin! It is fortunate that this is merely their *opinion*, which is discountenanced by both reason and Scripture. When

* Noel. Essay on Christ. Bap., 166. † Noel. Essay on Christ. Bap., 167, 169.

God said to Abraham, immediately before circumcision was instituted, "Walk before me, and be thou perfect," was the patriarch ignorant of the full import of what was enjoined? was no religious character, no faith, no voluntary choice, involved in the devout act when he bent, in response to the divine will, at the Almighty's feet? The Lord said, "For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment."* Here is decisive evidence that instructions, which, being properly received, were imparted to young and old, until the whole household was distinguished for the religious character of keeping "the way of the Lord." This picture, though very different from that sketched by our opponents, must be true, for it is drawn by "the Father of lights."

In opposition to the Scriptures, Mr. Noel says, p. 168.— "To suppose that 318 men-servants, capable of bearing arms with all their boys, living in a barbarous age among idolaters, without the Bible or other books, were all pious, is to suppose such a miracle as the world has never seen." It is easy to magnify a very simple matter into a miracle when it stands in our way. Whether this worthy man's opinion,—originating in a heated imagination,—or the plain statement of Scripture, should be adopted, cannot be long a subject of doubt with many. But why does he not tell the whole truth? Abraham was long celebrated for his faith, piety, zeal, intelligence, and love of God. Upon his past fidelity and success in ruling and training his household, God said that he knew his servant's future conduct. Abraham had for years taught those under his charge. But supposing that only a few hours were allotted to instruct them and obtain their consent, a much greater miracle was performed when 3000 believed, repented, and confessed, in as short a time. A greater mira-

* Gen. xviii. 19.

cle happened when many of the Samaritans were converted by the woman's simply recounting how Christ had related her secret history.

The same writer adds :—" All the subjects of Shechem were not at once converted." Probably not : nor were they all circumcised. Besides, Dr. Carson affirms, respecting baptism :—" Five minutes are sufficient to convince any man."* What changes one may, at the same instant, convert a thousand. The difficulty, in finding ample time for the conversion of the Shechemites, does not arise so much from the nature of the work, as from our opponents demanding years, or minutes, as their system is endangered or defended. This annoying vacillation frequently characterizes their debates. The sacred narrative does not state that the Shechemites were all converted at once, or even all circumcised. There were repeated negotiations between the parties, before final arrangements were made. We are informed that only those were circumcised who " went out of the gate of his city," an Eastern phraseology, which clearly intimates that the transaction, having been maturely weighed, was well understood. The difficulty of this case, supposed to be insurmountable and fatal to our cause, thus gradually disappears upon close examination.

But some readers may exclaim, " Why this discussion about the Shechemites at all ?" Because our opponents endeavour to prove by it, that " ignorant, ungodly, unregenerate, &c.," received circumcision, that, by thus degrading the divine ordinance, they may wrest from it all spirituality, cut off all resemblance between it and baptism, and the more easily hand over to Satan the infant offspring of believers. Let no one start at this last expression, as if it were not literally true. We know of only two communities, the Church and the world, in either of which we must be ; we know of only two

* Baptism, 236.

masters, Christ and Satan, to one of whom we must belong. There is, for either old or young, no neutral ground to occupy, no third master to serve.

He once more adduces "all the nations on the banks of the Jordan," and declares, p. 168, that the Israelites, when then circumcised, were not pious. Who told him so? He merely *supposes* they were not. Certainty, not conjecture, is indispensable for such a judgment, if he would not recklessly hazard the guilt before the righteous Judge, of falsely accusing his fellow mortals. A few days previously, they had been solemnly admonished by Moses standing on the verge of eternity, to know the Lord and keep his commandments; Joshua had "sanctified the people," risen early for prayer, and "said unto the children of Israel, Come hither, and hear the words of the Lord your God;" they had witnessed one of the most striking miracles upon record—the passage of the Jordan; they now stood in the land of promise, for which their hearts had so long and warmly beat; the manna had ceased, and their tables were covered with the produce of Canaan; the captain of the Lord's host had appeared as their leader. Whatever was the amount and permanency of their piety, to *assume* that, notwithstanding the instructive and impressive nature of recent events, they were ignorant of what they did, gave no expression to their faith, were ungodly, unregenerate, and less worthy of an Abrahamic rite than some we know baptised, by immersion, in mature years; and upon this hasty assumption, to determine dogmatically, without positive evidence, their spiritual, and thereby their eternal condition, merits the full weight of Paul's reproof: "Who art thou that judgest another man's servant? to his own master he standeth or falleth; yea, he shall be holden up: for God is able to make him stand."* Though they were as vile as supposed by Mr. Noel, they de-

* Rom. xiv. 4.

serve our pity and prayers ; and though their abuse of a sacred ordinance might deprive them of church privileges, that abuse can, by party prejudice alone, be converted into an argument against the spiritual character of that ordinance.

He somewhat qualifies his sweeping condemnation of the Hebrews at the Jordan, by saying, they "might, apparently, without profanation receive the rite." Is it possible that the unregenerate might, "*apparently*, without profanation," receive a rite which embraced, in its wide range, salvation and eternal life through Jesus Christ? Let it be remembered that our opponents sternly demand an explicit precept for the admission of children to baptism ; but they can, without seeming compunction, admit into the ancient Church of God, upon a mere "*apparently*," as many as they please : the most abandoned profligate and his household might be admitted of old, but the child of no believer can be received now ! This procedure is extremely unlike the constitution and discipline of the Church of the Great I AM.

Dr. Carson is, of course, even more bold. He says, p. 233. —"The very constitution of the Jewish church recognised the membership of carnal persons." We are appalled by such language ; even the repeating of it is painful ; and, in wondering what it really means, we are half disposed to believe—did he not boast so much of his sincerity, and the sacrifices he has made for his principles—that he merely wished to try the extent of our credulity. To represent an infinitely wise and holy Being as constituting *such* a Church, is too outrageous to impose upon any except upon weak and perverted minds. Having commanded Abraham to be perfect, as the first article in the covenant of which circumcision was the sign, God said to the people : "Ye shall be to me a holy nation.* And ye shall be holy men unto me.† Ye shall be holy, for I am holy."‡ But enough has been advanced to

* Ex. xix. 6.

† Ex. xxii. 31.

‡ Lev. xi. 44.

prove that revelation, and the above doctrine of an adult-baptist, are directly opposed to each other, and that infant baptism is secure, if it can be assailed only by such weapons.

6th. They affirm there was no church discipline among the Jews, and endeavour to convert this assumption into a powerful auxiliary to their cause. They first make the ancient Church a receptacle of all uncleanness—a loathsome thing; assert that no laws existed for the expulsion of offenders; then contrast it with the Christian Church, which they depict as the paragon of all excellence, whose beauty is disfigured by infant baptism alone. They confound what Christians are, with what they should be, and transfer, without qualification, the purity of the ordinance to its observers: their treatment of the ancient Church is diametrically the opposite. Now, we are not insensible to what forms the real superiority of the present dispensation; but the laws of discipline were formerly as strict as in modern times, if not more severe. The people were commanded to be pure in heart, holy in speech, and upright in deportment, whilst a violation of circumcision engagements deprived the culprit of religious privileges—death was sometimes the penalty, and a known unbeliever was not permitted to live. Nothing more can be said to prove the religious nature of baptism and the Lord's Supper. We speak of the law, not of the people's practice, as we speak of Christianity, apart from the defalcations of its professors. This is sometimes conceded by our friends, and at others forgotten. Hear their own words: "There was no law to exclude the Pharisees, or even the Sadducees, from the Jewish church. Their doctrines and practices were condemned by the Old Testament; but it was no corruption of the constitution of the church to contain them. On the other hand, the constitution of the churches of Christ rejects such persons, and provides for their expulsion. The distinction between

the two cases is as wide as the distance between earth and heaven.”* Very strong language this, and might provoke a smile, were the subject not of such awful solemnity. The officials might be negligent ; and the Lord might bear long with offenders ; but his laws were explicit ; and repeatedly does he require that the transgressor, in word or deed, in doctrine or conduct, should “ be cut off from Israel”†—deprived of Church privileges. The people knew, felt, and often confessed, their obligations to be upright in all things. One of the most affecting incidents upon record is the assembling of the twelve tribes at Shechem, when the vast multitude “ of Israel, with the women, and the little ones, and the strangers that were conversant among them,”‡ expressed their faith, and assented to “ all the words of the law, the blessings and cursings :” or when, on another occasion at the same place, “ the people said unto Joshua, the Lord our God will we serve, and his voice will we obey.”§ If officials were unmindful of their duty to purify the Church, or if signal punishments were to be inflicted, Jehovah executed his own law, and chastised Korah, Abiathar, Miriam, and many others. When Jesus drove the unclean from the courts of the temple, none gainsaid the righteousness of the deed, though they disputed *his* authority to execute the law.¶ The Hebrews were expelled from Canaan, and are kept in exile,—being thus deprived of both temporal and spiritual privileges, because of unbelief and disobedience. What more could be done to the Christian Church ?

Another respected adult-baptist says: “ God required Israel to obey him, and if they revolted against him they would be condemned and punished ; but they would be punished as a covenanted people. The covenant required them to be holy, but it was made with them all, holy or unholy, as the children of Abraham. The wickedness of

* Baptism, 233. † Ex. xii. 15. ‡ Josh. viii. 31-35. § Josh. xxiv. 24.
§ John, ii. 13-22.

the people did not alter the fact that God had taken them into covenant with himself."* The grand error on which this writer's opinion rests is his dividing the Abrahamic covenant into two parts essentially distinct, and thus separating what was revealed as a whole, though consisting of several particulars. He confesses that the Israelites, being required to be holy, were punished for disobedience; but *how* they could "be punished as a covenanted people," and not as individual offenders, or *why* they should be punished, when, as unholy, they were taken into covenant, he does not explain. If, as robbers, they were enrolled in a society without their knowledge and consent, to punish them afterwards for pursuing their ungodly avocation, does appear to imply injustice, and a want of discernment on the part of their chastiser. Nor are the Hebrews ever promised any blessing, spiritual or temporal, merely because they were the offspring of Abraham, and apart from their personal worth. From the beginning of time to the present hour, the equitable principle which has regulated all God's transactions with man is, "If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted? and if thou doest not well, sin lieth at the door."† The very fact that the Jews had Abraham as their father, increased, did not diminish, their guilt; and they proved themselves not to be Abraham's children, when they were destitute of his faith and works.‡ To receive unholy men into covenant, without even pledging themselves to reform, may be deemed, by some writers, a very powerful argument against our cause, but it fearfully derogates from the honour of God, and is contrary to the Scriptures. Or, to say that "the wickedness of the people did not" affect their covenant relations with Jehovah, is a doctrine of heathenism, and proves the extremity to which our opponents are driven in striving to rob the Church of infant baptism. An infinitely holy Being

* Essay on Chris. Bap., 150, 151. † Gen. iv. 7. ‡ Luke iii. 8. John viii. 39.

entering into a holy covenant, which demanded holiness, with murderers, adulterers, Sabbath-breakers, robbers, and drunkards, is a dreadful creed ; and if our cause can be destroyed only by such opinions, we may pity and pray for their authors, but we have nothing to fear.

It is not true that the Jews had no church discipline. They were bound to teach their children diligently, and these were required to obey, just as Christian parents and children are mutually bound to instruct and respect. Circumcision engaged them to live according to the laws of the covenant into which they had been admitted, for Paul says : " Circumcision verily profiteth, if thou keep the law ; but if thou breakest the law, thy circumcision is made uncircumcision."* They were thus pledged, from their earliest years, to observe all God's ordinances, and keep his commandments ; to " cease to do evil, and learn to do well ;" to honour their high vocation to holiness, and prove that they were dedicated to the divine service, that goodness and mercy might follow them all the days of their life, and that they might dwell in the house of the Lord for ever.† The very fact that every man's life depended upon his belief, necessarily implies that his faith had been expressed and was known, and that there were rules by which to try the offender, and a church-power to inflict punishment. The laws for regulating their worship were numerous and minute ; the blessings promised to obedience were great ; the penalties for transgression were severe ; and heavy punishments were inflicted for the neglect or contempt of religious ordinances.

In contrasting the Jewish and Christian institutions, one author says : " The Lord's Supper, as well as baptism, belongs solely to the true Israel of God : the passover belonged to the carnal Israel, without respect to their faith or character. The persons whom John drove from his baptism, had

* Rom. ii. 25.

† Ps. xxiii. 6.

as good a right to all the Jewish ordinances as John the Baptist himself.”* He thus, by stripping them of spirituality, creates a favourable opportunity for depreciating the ancient rites. He forgets that the Lord has always required from every worshipper, “Give me thine heart;” and the Jews are often condemned for approaching him with the lip whilst the heart was far from him. The same spirituality and devotion of soul have uniformly been demanded from every one who approached Jehovah’s hallowed throne. That hypocrites, self-righteous, and rebellious, were too frequently amongst the Hebrews, is a painful reality: but God bore with them in long-suffering mercy, and it is unbecoming in a Christian to convert that forbearance into an argument against the spirituality of his worship. If their severe laws of discipline were not executed, the fault lay exclusively with the officers of his justice. He repeatedly bewailed the backslidings of Israel, saying, “O that there were such an heart in them,”† as Paul lamented the defections of the Church of Philippi: “I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ.”‡ Because these transgressors were not instantly cut down and cast out, was there no spirituality in *their* gospel ordinances? Had they no church discipline? Were there no laws to punish the offenders? Notwithstanding the efforts of our opponents to establish the contrary, spirituality of mind was as necessary, the laws of discipline were as rigid, and the penalties inflicted as severe of old, as under the present economy. The ancient law permitted none to be in unbelief, and the gospel is “the savour of death unto death,” or “of life unto life.”§

7th. They assume that the Abrahamic covenant was defective, and that none of its external rites could be succeeded by the spiritual ordinances of Christianity. “The Abrahamic national covenant being thus conditional, was

* Baptism, 229. † Deut. v. 29. ‡ Phil. iii. 18. § 2 Cor. ii. 16.

defectible.”* This is a startling announcement from a minister of the gospel. In labouring to substantiate their averments, our opponents confound the promise of Christ delivered to Abraham, with the law promulgated at Sinai. That promise was first given to Adam in Eden, was repeated to Noah, and has formed the foundation of all intercourse between God and sinful man. Moses received, along with the re-assurance of Christ’s incarnation, a code of laws, especially the ten commandments, then collected and written. The Sinaitic law, properly so called, demanded ceaseless and uncompromising obedience in action, word, and thought, or denounced death ; but the covenant of Abraham, if its external ordinances could never make the comer thereunto perfect, included Christ and pointed the believing Jews, for mercy to pardon, grace to help, and love to redeem, to Him in whom “all nations of the earth shall be blessed.” That covenant, with its promises and ceremonies, was the ordination of infinite wisdom, and since “the Judge of all the earth” doeth right, it savours of presumption to say that his institutions are defective. It is true, Paul says : “For the law made nothing perfect, but the bringing in of a better hope did ; by the which we draw nigh unto God.”* This he afterwards explains : “Which was a figure for the time then present, in which were offered both gifts and sacrifices, that could not make him that did the sacrifice perfect, *as pertaining to the conscience.*”† In these ordinances, there was a remembrance, no forgiveness, of guilt ; a ceremonial cleansing, no purifying of the conscience, from sin. These blessings could be obtained only by the atonement of the Lamb of God, and the sanctification of the Spirit. Still, these ordinances were perfect for their purpose, and the covenant itself was complete, for, including Christ, it embraced all that the soul can need.

Neither did the admonitions to obedience, nor warnings

* Essay on Christian Baptism, 159. † Heb. vii. 19. ‡ Heb. ix. 9.

against apostacy, render it more "conditional," than is the Christian dispensation. Even now men may "draw back unto perdition."* No language more solemn, awful, and instructive, in teaching man that external privileges and internal grace are not essentially conjoined, or in establishing the necessity of supernatural aid to persevere in faith and obedience, was ever uttered to any people of God, than is Heb. ii. 2, 3 :—"For if the word spoken by angels was steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompence of reward : How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation?" All that is repeated now, as encouragement or admonition, was said of old, though the messengers and institutions be different.† We may still make shipwreck of our faith ;‡ and "if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost."|| Yet no man, who believes the Bible, will be reckless enough to affirm, that the Christian dispensation is defective, though the one affirmation would be as sound as the other. No argument, therefore, against infant baptism, can be drawn from the *supposed* defectiveness of the Abrahamic covenant.

8th. They take it for granted that "*servants*" were compelled, against their will, to receive the rite of circumcision. The venerable translators of the Bible, not being entirely emancipated from the errors of the dark ages, were too much inclined to immersion and slavery, to do full justice to the original Scriptures. On this department of the subject, the language of our opponents, who appear similarly biassed, is very grieving. Assuming that what they call "*slaves*" were bound, without instruction or intelligence, to submit to their master's pleasure, like beasts of burden, they say : "Abraham's slaves were commanded to be circumcised, without any reference to faith. As a master, he had power to enforce obedience, and this commission authorised him."§ We are

* Heb. x. 39. † Heb. i. 2. ‡ 1 Tim. i. 19. || 2 Cor. iv. 3.

§ Dr. Carson, 225.

deeply distressed at the frequency and dogmatism with which they assert that "*slaves*" were thus bound, without either knowledge or consent, to submit to circumcision, as if they were irrational and irresponsible animals, and as if God could accept any homage unless cheerfully rendered.

There are two fallacies in the above quotations. It is assumed that Abraham did not instruct his household as to the nature of the ordinance, and that his servants submitted in ignorance, perhaps with reluctance. The whole circumstances of the case are decidedly against that *supposition*—for it is nothing more, that either compulsion was employed, or an unintelligible and unwilling obedience rendered. Abraham was required to be perfect ; and one part of his duty was to instruct his household, that they might yield a wise and cheerful homage to their common Maker and Redeemer ; that they might know the whole counsel of God, and, keeping it with all the heart, might serve him in love. It is ungenerous, therefore,—if not something worse—to conjecture that he was deficient in this department of domestic fidelity, since God declares that he knew the patriarch's assiduity in training those under his charge. He understood what he did, he was faithful in his household, and it is unjust to assume that any adults under his roof were entirely ignorant, and that he would not exact from them the same confession of their faith, which he himself had so recently and devoutly given. When God expressly declares that he knew Abraham's fidelity and success among his servants, no man is warranted to conjecture that he did not perform his duty, much less is he authorised to build upon that conjecture a religious creed and practice.

The illustration, given by Mr. Innes, and deemed so conclusive that compulsion might be lawfully employed, is not to the point :—" If in Israel a beautiful woman was taken captive, and an Israelite chose to marry her, it was the

Divine ordinance that her hair and nails should be cut." To place the treatment of a captive, and an institution of religion, upon an equality, in such matters, is to do injustice to the word of God. The Israelites were not allowed to make war against any nation who did not invade their territories, or inflict on them an injury. The captives taken in these wars were kept in bondage as a punishment for their offence. A Hebrew might force a female captive to become his servant; but we have no evidence that he could compel her, against her will, to become his wife. Whatever relationship existed between them, she was bound to remove from her person, as a punishment, everything sacred to idols, as our prisoners are constrained to wear a particular dress. Who would compare this penalty with the sacred ordinances of the house of God? Between a captive taken in war, and a voluntary servant, there is no analogy. Mr. Innes, therefore, adduces as conclusive evidence that no consent for circumcision was required, what has no bearing on the subject.

The slavery, too, of modern times, which regards a fellow mortal as goods and chattels, *was unknown amongst the Jews*. The only slaves they were permitted to have, though not to sell, were captives taken in war, who were thus, as we exile felons and murderers, punished for invading Canaan. In Ex. xxi. 16, we read:—"And he that stealeth a man, and selleth him, or if he be found in his hand, he shall surely be put to death." Here is an explicit precept, and yet our opponents will not be guided by it. The Jews were forbidden to make even servants of one another, except in very peculiar circumstances, for a specified time, and by mutual consent, whilst the seventh year, or the year of jubilee, brought freedom to all, with the restoration of bonded property. They might, for a period of time agreed upon by the contracting parties, hire voluntary servants from the surrounding nations; but for these likewise a day of liberty was provided,

and all such agreements were arranged according to the length and kind of service. We are, indeed, told in Gen. xvii. 12.—“And he that is eight days old shall be circumcised among you, every man child in your generations: he that is born in the house, or bought with money of any stranger, which is not of thy seed.” But the Hebrew word translated “*bought*,” signifies to form, create, get, acquire, obtain, possess, and even to *redeem*, as well as to buy. Its particular meaning, in any given case, must be determined by the circumstances in which it is employed. For instance, the same word is first used, and properly translated, in Gen. iv. 1.—“I have *gotten* a man from the Lord.” Was Cain, Eve’s first-born, *purchased* with money? It is found in Ex. xxi. 2, —“If thou *buy* an Hebrew servant, six years he shall serve; and in the seventh he shall go out free for nothing.” Here it distinctly means to hire, or engage the servant—to buy the labour, not the man. We again read: “Do ye thus requite the Lord, O foolish people and unwise? is not he thy father that hath *bought* thee? hath he not made thee, and established thee?”* There was here no purchase money given; for God redeemed, did not buy them, as this word is commonly understood in mercantile transactions. All, therefore, that can be legitimately concluded from the word is, that foreigners willingly served the Israelites, and received the stipulated remuneration for their labours. These individuals, settled and residing amongst the Hebrews, were to be circumcised; and if either they, or any of the Israelites, did not submit to the rite, they were to be cut off, or separated from the people—denied the privileges of the church of God, as impenitent offenders are now to be regarded as heathen men and sinners. The hypothesis, therefore, that slaves were compelled to be circumcised because they were their master’s property, which is pronounced so fatal to our cause,

* Deut. xxxii. 6.

and which affords our opponents an opportunity for lengthened disquisitions on the superior spirituality and liberty of Christianity, completely fails, being without Scriptural authority.

9th. They assert that the Abrahamic covenant was exclusively national. Mr. Noel says, p. 165 :—"Rightly, then, does the Apostle Paul say that the covenant of grace is better than the legal national covenant." In proof, he refers to Heb. viii. 6.—"But now hath he obtained a more excellent ministry, by how much also he is the mediator of a better covenant, which was established upon better promises." The apostle does not speak of a national covenant, but of the ordinances of religion. True, he calls these a covenant, and says that Christ "is the mediator of a better covenant ;" for they formed a covenant, or engagement, which the people were bound to respect and observe. He compares the duties of the priests in the sanctuary built by men, with the offices of Christ as a priest in the tabernacle above—of which the earthly was a type, and rightly affirms, in reference to these offices, that Christ hath "obtained a more excellent ministry." He afterwards shows, that if the ancient ordinances could have accomplished all that was necessary for man's salvation, another dispensation, or a new covenant, would neither have been required nor given.

Mr. Noel confounds the substance of the covenant with its external rites and ceremonies. This is a common error with adult-baptists. There are neither two religions, nor two covenants of grace in the Bible ; and the piety of the saints, in both the Old and New Testaments, was identical in principle and character. The outward forms of this one religion have been Antediluvian, Patriarchal, Mosaic, and Christian ; but the faith, repentance, love, and hope, which constitute the essence of true piety, have undergone no change ; and God's affection for his people, Christ's care, and the Spirit's superintendence, are unchanged and unchangeable.

The main question here is, were *all* the promises of the Abrahamic covenant national? and not, did it contain *no* such promise? That the Hebrews should possess Canaan; that from them, "according to the flesh," the Messiah should spring; that sacrifices should be offered in Jerusalem alone; and that the mercy-seat should dwell in the city of the great King, may be styled national promises, or covenants. But neither circumcision, the passover, nor salvation through Christ, was confined to the Hebrew nation. Circumcision had a wide range,—it was of the fathers; Ishmael, though circumcised, was expressly excluded from Canaan, not from the grace which the covenant included; the resident strangers and servants were circumcised, or cut off from the ordinances of religion; the Ethiopian Eunuch was circumcised: these individuals, and many others similarly situated, could not enjoy the temporal benefits of the covenant which were national, but they could enjoy, as fully and freely as any Hebrew, its religious ordinances, its spiritual and eternal blessings. Whatever the Jewish people might be, the Jewish religion was not the narrow, bigoted, selfish, exclusive, and national thing which some would represent it; for in all its highest privileges it might have embraced the world. Its language was,—“Ye shall have one manner of law, as well for the stranger as for one of your own country: for I am the Lord your God.”* We may still have sectarian folly preaching “*our Zion*,” and proclaiming that salvation is not beyond its little pale; but the Gospel is not, and never was, a respecter of persons, or a *national* covenant.

10th. They assume that the ordinances of Christianity ensure grace. They are accustomed to depreciate the rights of the Abrahamic covenant as if they were not the institutions of infinite love and wisdom, and to speak so enthusiastically of the ordinances of Christianity, that we might imagine the

* Lev. xxiv. 22.

former were entirely destitute of every good, and the latter are of boundless value. They can discern little, if any spiritual benefit under the old economy ; but they no sooner have adopted the peculiar tenets of their party, denied the validity of infant baptism, confessed their faith, and been immersed, than a new and wonderful light bursts upon their minds ; they are charmed into ecstasies and joy ; they look with compassion upon those not favoured with their visions, and banish them from their Christian fellowship ! May part of this spiritual illumination and fancied superiority, not be a delusion ? We know individuals of this description who, being taught to believe in the almost miraculous virtue of Gospel ordinances, have, at the moment of immersion, boastingly avowed their faith, proclaiming themselves to be “ sons of God,” and sure of heaven, and who, if by their fruits they can be known, gave painful evidence that they were still “ in the gall of bitterness and bond of iniquity,” and were soon afterwards expelled from religious communion. Such is one baneful consequence of exalting outward ceremonies into the place of sovereign grace, and being seized by the immersion mania.

It is somewhat remarkable that the parties who so degrade the privileges of ancient believers, should deny to the children of the saints under the more favoured economy, a kindred rite with that which the infant seed of Abraham enjoyed. Besides, if circumcision was the initiatory rite into carnal privileges alone, then there was none into the Church of God, unless the same ordinance introduced into them both, which is partly the very truth for which we contend. Mr. Noel says, pp. 156, 157 : “ With these passages in our recollection, we must see that the covenant under which the children of Israel were placed promised them temporal blessings and means of grace, but not grace itself. It was a covenant of external blessings, not a covenant of grace.” Thus writes a worthy, though erring brother, who is dreadfully

bewildered by his aversion to infant baptism. It is a consolation that we can appeal from such unscriptural notions to the Bible itself, where we are taught in language most explicit, that Christ and heaven were in that covenant, and it must therefore have included grace also.

Dr. Carson informs us, p. 231,—“The church of Israel had the circumcision of the flesh,—the church of the New Testament have the circumcision of the heart.” His argument amounts to this, because “the church of the New Testament have the circumcision of the heart,” “the church of Israel” had it not! This *is* a new doctrine, not found in the Scriptures, and comes awkwardly from a leader in a party who so proudly lecture us upon our adding to, and taking from, the word of God. We did believe there were such passages as “Circumcise therefore the fore-skin of your heart. Circumcise yourselves to the Lord, and take away the foreskins of your heart, ye men of Judah and inhabitants of Jerusalem.”* The above writer denies, the Scriptures affirm, that the church of Israel *did* enjoy the circumcision of the heart. Such is the heterodoxy of our opponents; such are the teachings of inspiration: which are we to believe? It is lamentable that all this depreciating of Old Testament blessings, exaltation of New Testament joys, and misapplication of God’s holy word, should be undertaken to exclude the infants of believers from baptism. Alas! for the common people when the leaders so wander from the truth.

But Mr. Noel, p. 117, has still greater wonders. “True baptism secures pardon, Acts ii. 38; xxii. 16. True baptism secures the gift of the Spirit, Acts ii. 38. Baptism is generally necessary to salvation, John iii. 5. True baptism saves, 1 Peter iii. 20; Mark xvi. 16; Titus iii. 5.” In summing up what he calls his accumulated evidence on these topics, he is pleased to tell us it “is such that it is difficult to understand how any one who is guided in his religious opinions

* Deut. x. 16; Jer. iv. 4.

by the word of God, can arrive at any other conclusion." Were we more ignorant of human nature, our wonder would be that a man, otherwise so worthy, should entertain and promulgate such dangerous doctrines, or have, amongst Bible readers, a single follower. His opinions are the very essence of Popery, may cool the ardour of those who so vehemently accuse infant baptism of being "the prop and pillar of Papacy," and induce them to reconsider Mat. vii. 3.—"And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye?"

Our respected author evidently still feels the influence of "baptismal regeneration," held by some in the church which he has recently abandoned. By the phrase, "true baptism," we might, at first glance, be induced to imagine that he alludes to the baptism of the Spirit; but the words, "Baptism is generally necessary to salvation," dispel the illusion and reveal the terrible truth—namely, that the outward rite secures the internal blessing. He does say, in his "Essay on Baptism," p. 8,—"The external act can save no one:" but this contradiction of himself increases the confusion that so prevails throughout his work, and evinces the impossibility of supporting his theory by consistency and Scripture. He repeatedly confounds the symbol with the thing signified,—the shadow with the substance that makes it. No means of grace can, of themselves, secure the blessings of grace, more than the plough, which tills the soil, can ensure an abundant autumn. The husbandman labours, and trusts to a gracious Providence for his reward; the Christian, having done all, confesses himself an unprofitable servant, and looks to Jesus for grace to crown his toils; the one confides in God's goodness, the other, in his mercy: the latter knows that salvation is by faith, and not by works, and his heartfelt exclamation is: "Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto thy name give glory, for thy mercy, and thy truth's sake."*

* Ps. cxv. 1.

He says, "Baptism is generally necessary to salvation." This, whilst it fully accounts for the importance attached to immersion, is one of the most incomprehensible sentiments that has issued from the press in these days of enlightenment. We can understand how a duty, generally binding, may be dispensed with in extreme cases of affliction and feebleness, as when the expiring malefactor was, after expressing his faith and penitence, entitled to baptism, yet his position rendered its administration impossible ; and we can understand the obligations of individuals not so situated, to observe all the ordinances of Christianity ; but how a rite can be *generally* "necessary to salvation," and not *always* so, is among the deep things of mysticism which we cannot fathom. Perhaps this blindness of ours illustrates what Dr. Cox meant by saying, that we had "not discernment enough to appreciate the force of evidence, or not piety enough to pursue the path of duty."* Be it so; God shall judge. We are stubborn enough to confess, that we are unmoved, except to compassion, by such accusations, and we fondly hope that our piety shall ever preserve us from such unsound doctrines.

We have thus hurriedly glanced at the leading mistakes committed by some adult-baptists. We do not profess to have followed them through every labyrinth of sophistry ; nor have we considered their mutual and self-contradictions. Our prescribed limits, however, having been filled up, it may be asked, why all this contention ? Because our friends so labour to depreciate the Old, and exalt the New Testament economy, that they may the more easily admit infants to the ordinances of the one, and effectually exclude them from those of the other ; and because we are solicitous to ward off assaults against Bible truth, defend its integrity, and secure, for young and old, their sacred rights and privileges. May the Lord guide us by his counsel, and afterward receive us into glory !† AMEN.

* Page 6.

† Ps. lxxiii. 24.

B A P T I S M.

T H I R D L E C T U R E ;

BY

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B A P T I S M.

"But when Jesus saw it, he was much displeased, and said unto them, Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not : for of such is the kingdom of God." Mark x., 14.

To overwhelm us with difficulties, and prevent further investigation, we are told that, if we admit children to baptism, we must also receive them to the Lord's Supper ; which, it is said, was actually done at an early age of the Church. We neither conceal nor defend abuses connected with either adult or infant baptism ; and were these corruptions on both sides considered, it is possible that the history of our opponents might afford ample materials for a successful retaliation. He is an unworthy advocate who cannot assail an opposing system upon its own merits, and who must, coward-like, take refuge in abuses which are not its legitimate consequences, and which human folly has devised. Paul did not condemn the Lord's Supper because the Corinthian Church had wickedly converted it into a scene of riot : he boldly reproved the offenders, removed existing abuses, and brought back the holy festival to its original simplicity and spirituality. We also plead for the doctrine and practice

of the Bible, taking it alone as our guide, and acknowledging none but Jesus to be our Master.

To maintain that, because we admit none except baptized persons to the communion table, we must, therefore, receive all whom we baptize, irrespective of their age, is unfair and unjust. Children may be admissable to the one ordinance, though not to the other. God formerly ordained that they should be circumcised when eight days old ; and not until twelve years of age were they permitted to eat the passover, or engage in the public services of the temple. Will our opponents likewise ridicule this arrangement ? It is sufficient if infants receive the milk which the Lord has provided for babes, though they claim not the strong meat of adults. Declining to notice farther this sophistry of special pleaders, we ask, has the Lord now appointed for children no religious ordinance ? and if he has, what is it ?

We are sometimes told, by adult-baptists, that they have the argument, and we the popular feeling !* This taunt is meant to be a scorn. Waiving the fact that such language strips us of all ability, or willingness, to found, independently of human applause, our belief on the word of God ; and supposing that popular feeling is in our favour, we naturally inquire, is it always wrong ? Does it never spring from right principles ? Was it at fault when it “ resisted unto death ” the aggressions of civil and ecclesiastical tyranny, procured and preserved for us our precious rights and privileges, bought by the noblest blood of Britain’s free-born sons ? Was it false when it demanded, with a voice that made our senators quail, shook the very throne, and paid twenty millions of hard-earned wealth, that our slave population might walk in the liberty and dignity of British subjects ? The mass of the people, or “ the lower orders,” as they are scoffingly styled—though they are lower as the

* Dr. Cox.

foundation-stones which bear the vast pyramid, and without which it would speedily tumble in ruins—*are* on our side. This fact, voluntarily admitted by our opponents, and at which we rejoice, is strong presumptive evidence that we are right.

When we connect the Old and New Testament Churches, and rightfully demand proof that children, once grafted into the vine of God's heritage, have ever been cut off by the divine authority, which alone can be recognised in the matter, we are asked: "Why go to the Old Testament on behalf of a Christian institution?" Our answer is simple and conclusive. 1. Because our opponents do the same thing for the continuance of the Sabbath, the use of clothing for the baptized, and tell us that females, who partook of the Passover, are therefore entitled to participate in the Lord's Supper. 2. They appeal, in support of immersion, to a foreign language, and to superstitious practices among the Hindoos and Egyptians.* 3. Our Saviour, with his apostles, having made a similar appeal to prove his Messiahship, the necessity of his atonement and resurrection, has taught us the example. 4. Without such an appeal, the New Testament—especially the Epistle to the Hebrews—could not be properly understood. 5. It brings one part of inspiration to expound another, and is the only safe mode of interpretation. Hence it is that, "God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it," "Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy," are our two principal arguments for the continued obligations of that day. We rest the claims of children to the ordinance of baptism upon the same authority; for, if the unrepealed law be binding in the one case, it is equally permanent and obligatory in the other. So also do the Scriptures prove that Christ is our Passover. The ancient ritual may be abolished, a better may be instituted in its room, and the outward

* Essay on Bap., 82, 83, Baptism, 30.

forms and elements may be changed, but the same faith in the God of Abraham was alike indispensable in both cases. It is a singular fact that our opponents, who uniformly travel to the East, or the South, *never* to the North, for illustrations of immersion, always condemn *our* appeals, not their own, to the Old Testament! But, with the examples of Jesus and his ambassadors, we can be prevented by no human dictation from taking as our guide the entire Bible.

The admission of infants into the Church of God is never expressly, nor by implication, disturbed; but it is carried into the Church of Christ, composed of Jews and Gentiles; and infants, who were entitled to religious privileges under the old economy, claim, upon the same authority, an interest in those of the new. Our opponents, therefore, being unable to produce a direct warrant for the abrogation of the ancient law, adduce what they affirm is equivalent. They bring forward—

1st. Matt. xxviii. 19.—“Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.” Some adult-baptists profess their willingness to suspend their whole cause on this passage; others even declare that, after this direct statement, they would not baptise children though it were clearly enjoined by an express command; and Dr. Carson says: “I would gainsay an angel from heaven, who should say that this commission may extend to the baptism of any but believers.”* Such language is very unseemly, if not sinful. To resist and succeed are not exactly the same thing; for individuals, like Balaam, have gainsaid angels, but never to their own honour.

The passage, however, is worthy of a few moments’ consideration. The commission extends to all nations without distinction of sex or age; and children, who make a great, if

* Baptism, 170.

not the greatest part of any nation, must be virtually included. The former sign of admission into the Church was circumcision, which implied an obligation to obey the whole law of Moses, but which—the ceremonial law being repealed—was now laid aside, and baptism substituted in its room. We are told that the baptized party must be taught before receiving the rite of baptism ; and since children are incapable of being instructed, they must be excluded. Now, adults alone could be addressed on such an occasion, and to them the command is given. But this is no proof that children were excommunicated. The nations were to be discipled, baptized, and instructed. Of the particular manner in which this was to be done, and of the different parties to be admitted into their communion, the Apostles, not being precisely informed by our Redeemer, are presumed to understand sufficiently from the Word of God and practice of the church. They were intimately acquainted with the former modes of procedure ; and our Saviour evidently takes it for granted that, after the previous full revelation of God on these subjects, they needed no farther information. Disciples to the Jewish religion, and their children, were formerly circumcised ; and disciples, with their infants, to the faith of Jesus, were to be baptized. Adults were to be instructed as formerly, and they were bound to teach their offspring ; for the Church of God, having merely its external ordinances changed, was under the same laws as anciently. Hence children, being reared as, and bearing the name of, his disciples, thus became his disciples from their infancy under the new, as they had been under the old dispensation. No parties were now to be deprived of privileges, and none, therefore, are excommunicated. The promises were unto adults and their children who were to “be as aforetime ;” instructions were still to be imparted ; the ancient mode of reception into the Church was merely expressed differently, to suit altered circumstances ; and no *new* command is given, because none was required.

Reading the passage as a Jew would understand it—and by this understanding, founded upon the Word of God, must it be expounded—he would distinctly conclude that it embraced his “little ones.” His offspring were formerly received into the church of God ; he received no intimation that they were now to be cast out ; the whole of the prophecies, relating to the advent of the Messiah, taught him that his male children, whose privileges were to be extended, not curtailed, would still be admitted ; and he now receives an ordinance equally applicable to both sexes, and placing them upon an equality, for in Christ “there is neither male nor female.” Had the words of institution stood thus : “Disciple all nations, baptizing them, *except the children*,”—which is the implied interpretation forced upon the words of our Lord by our opponents—the Jews would naturally have asked in amazement, Are all our loved little ones now cut off from the church, and thrown out into the world, like withered branches ?—is this the promised and boasted extension of their rights ? But they had no cause so to complain, for the expulsion of their children is a human and modern device, not the work of Jesus. The words of institution, therefore, being as full and explicit as circumstances required, are direct evidence that children were included. Common sense every day makes the necessary extension in such general forms of speech. It is controversy alone that finds in them any difficulty.

Were our burgesses, whose sons at present enjoy privileges with a prescribed mode of admission, to be informed, by Act of Parliament, that, at a certain period, both their *sons and daughters* would be invested with the same immunities, and “a new law” established in accommodation to the proposed change ; and were another Act of Parliament to arrive in due time, stating, in general yet plain terms, that the new rights and laws were, according to promise, now conferred upon both them and their children, would they not justly deem this se-

cond enactment a sufficient confirmation and fulfilment of the first? Were they to be informed that this latter act deprived both their sons and daughters of *every benefit*, they would rightfully and loudly condemn their informant as being destitute of wisdom, or their sovereign as guilty of deception. But their King will not, cannot deceive: their informant must, therefore, be wrong. An appeal to the former practice and bond will convince them—and no one acquainted with the *whole* case will attempt to persuade them to the contrary—that their children *must* be included. The Apostles so comprehended the Old Testament promises, and as readily applied them as if the command had been, “Disciple all nations, *circumcising* them.” Adults were to be baptized; but not a syllable as to the exclusion of their children. No new charter is given, for the old is retained, and the promises of extended privileges are now fulfilled: it is baptize all nations, not baptize adults, or males alone, whilst the mere form, not the nature, of admission is altered. Upon this clear understanding were so many households baptized; and just as the Apostles acted, so do our missionaries proceed. Neither of them give us the strange information that they preached the gospel to all in a house, or in a city, *except to the children*. They preached the glad tidings to adults, placing infants in a position to receive Christian instruction, and thus actually proclaimed Christ to even the babe on the mother’s knee!

To overturn these plain and conclusive arguments, our antagonists boldly affirm that, since the words of institution are silent regarding children, these must be excluded. Dr. Carson says, “Till the end of the world it will remain a duty for all believers to be baptized.”* This is our own doctrine, announced with a ridiculous air of triumph, as if his affirmation settled the whole case, though it never touches the question in debate. We baptize believers as well as our

* Baptism, 170.

opponents ; and to represent us as “ substituting infant baptism for the baptism of believers,”* is a false accusation of their brethren ; but we do not contradict the Scriptures by saying that, because adult believers are addressed by our Lord, and are to be baptized, therefore their children are now deprived of Christian privileges. We add the case of infants to, do not substitute it for, that of adults. This is the proper point between us, and no reckless assertion will draw us from the main subject.

The Dr. adds,—assuming that the institution is silent regarding children : “ Here, then, I stand entrenched, and I defy the ingenuity of earth and hell to drive me from my position.”† Had these words wisdom proportioned to their extravagance, they would be unanswerable. But, if everything is forbidden on which Scripture is silent, then many sins may be committed, and duties neglected, with impunity. It is because of this *supposed* silence that the perpetual obligation of the Sabbath is denied ; that some believe none of the Apostles, except Paul, were baptized ; that, in some communities, the rightful privileges of females are withheld ; that the Seventh-day Baptists observe the Jewish, not the Christian, Sabbath ; that the Roman Catholics support many of their dangerous tenets by Scripture ; that the most licentious parts of Mormonism are defended ; and that the divinity of Christ is disputed ! Such are specimens of the baneful consequences of founding a religious opinion upon detached portions of the Word of God ; of assuming that silence abrogates a law ; of acting upon human conjectures, and not permitting the whole Bible to be its own expositor. Yet Dr. Carson is so convinced that the words of institution exclude children because not specially designated, and are such positive evidence that adults alone should be baptized, that he exultingly exclaims : “ Till the trumpet sounds for

* Baptism, 171.

† Baptism, 170.

judgment, it cannot be effaced.”* Strong proof, this, of the worthy man’s boldness, but none of the goodness of his cause.

Since the last writer says: “I am willing to hang the whole controversy on this passage,”† his opinion deserves a still further refutation. If, then, children must be excluded from such passages, mark the result. When Moses was sent to emancipate the people, he was desired to preach to them, that whoever kept the passover and the sprinkling of blood, in faith of salvation from the destroyer, should be delivered. None of these things could infants do, nor are they named. Were they therefore not included in the salvation? were *they* left in Egypt? were *they* not baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea? Moses said unto the people, Ex. xiii. 3, “Remember this day, in which ye came out from Egypt, out of the house of bondage.” But children are not mentioned; they could neither understand the words of Moses, nor remember the day of Israel’s deliverance. Were there no infants, therefore, among the vast multitude? Were they all left behind, to be reared for slavery by tyrants from whom their fathers had so gladly escaped? Our opponents would soon give a reply were it not so fatal to their cause. In Ex. xiv. 29, we are told, “The children of Israel walked upon dry land in the midst of the sea.” The Hebrews thus *walked*; but infants cannot walk; therefore, there were no children among the two millions that were then baptized unto Moses! Who will believe this except a misguided partizan, who leaps at conclusions, and tramples upon the plainest truths? At Sinai, too, Moses addressed those who were capable of hearing and understanding him when he said, “Hear, O Israel, thou shalt love the Lord thy God,” &c. The people responded, “All that the Lord hath spoken will we do, and will be obedient.” Was there no profession here? Were children not included when “Moses took the blood, and

* Baptism, 171.

† P. 169.

sprinkled *all* the people?" Joshua says, "As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord." Children are not named, nor can they worship God; therefore there were none in the whole families under Joshua's charge! Can any reasonable person believe these conjectures? Yet they are unavoidable, if children must be excluded when they are not specially mentioned. Dr. Carson's exclamations, therefore, must be received as unseemly and misplaced. Let us not wrong the Scriptures, then, by applying one mode of interpretation to the above passages, and another to the institution of baptism, since they are all of the same description, and are equally extensive in their application.

But in proof of this silence question, Heb. vii. 14 is quoted: "For it is evident that our Lord sprang out of Juda, of which tribe Moses spake nothing concerning priesthood." Here, it is said, nothing is spoken of Jesus springing from the tribe of Juda, because he did not belong to it. Our opponents forget, however, that there was an express command confining the priesthood to the tribe of Levi: Moses taught both the restriction and the exclusion. When they shall prove, by express precept, that baptism is restricted to adults, and that children are excluded, they shall then, but not till then, do something for their cause. But we deny that the Scriptures are more silent respecting the baptism of children than regarding their being called from Egypt, carried through the Red Sea, and being in the house of Joshua. All nations speak in similar phraseology, which imports the same thing, and no difficulty is supposed to exist, until disputants appear, who exact, from common and well understood terms, an unreasonable precision. The practice of the ancient church, the promises of the Old Testament, the plain meaning of the whole Bible, the uninterrupted connection between parents and children, our Saviour's treatment of little ones, and the conduct of the Apostles, distinctly prove that children are as

clearly comprehended in the words of institution as were the adults addressed.

2d. Mark xvi. 16,—“He that believeth, and is baptized, shall be saved ; but he that believeth not shall be damned.” This, with adult-baptists, is a favourite text. They adduce the passage as incontrovertible evidence that actual belief is indispensable for baptism, and they argue that, since children cannot have active faith, they cannot be admissable to that ordinance. Now, upon this principle of interpretation, the fair construction of the verse is, that actual faith is as indispensable for salvation as it is for baptism, and consequently, if infants cannot be baptized, neither can they be saved, and they are thus excluded from heaven, as well as from the initiatory rite, unless it be admitted that, in both cases, there is something required from adults in order to their baptism and eternal happiness, which is not required from infants. So manifest is this legitimate conclusion, that Dr. Carson admits : “If there were no way of saving children but by the gospel, this conclusion would be inevitable. But the gospel has nothing to do with infants. By the gospel no infant can be saved.”* Of his unwarrantable distinction between the gospel and the atonement of Christ, few will envy this author ; and since he *must* do such glaring violence to the Scriptures to defend his theory, neither his defence nor system can have Bible authority.

We read, John vi. 47.—“He that believeth on me hath everlasting life.” Of whom are these words spoken ? Of adults undoubtedly ; for the Scriptures never, in any case, require faith from children. But, according to the reasoning of our opponents, no infant can be saved, because no infant can believe. If none can be redeemed, or baptized, except those who actually believe, then children must be excluded from glory as well as from baptism ! Our blessed Lord, in

* Baptism, 173.

the above quotation, no more deprives children of salvation than Philip debars them from baptism, when he addresses the eunuch, Acts viii. 37.—“If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest.” Under both the old and new economies an expression of faith and repentance was exacted from adults. Upon that confession, man was bound to administer the ordinance of either circumcision or baptism; and God judgeth the condition of the heart. Our Saviour, Mark, and Philip, all speak of adults alone, and the main question, regarding infants, remains a perfectly distinct subject.

Granting adult-baptists the full benefit of the passage, therefore, what does it really prove? Simply that converted adults must confess their faith before being baptized. It thus leaves the case of infants entirely untouched. There is only one opinion regarding adults not baptized in infancy, who, professing their faith in Jesus, desire to be received into the communion of the Church. In the above quotation from Mark, they are as distinctly and exclusively mentioned by the Apostle as in the precept: “For even when we were with you, this we commanded you, that if any would not work, neither should he eat.”* But we learn as certainly, from other parts of Scripture, that children of believing parents are to be received into the church without an expression of their faith, as that they are to be fed though they cannot labour. The text from Mark speaks of adults alone; for it supposes them capable of faith, which is necessary to both their baptism and salvation, but is necessary to neither in the case of infants. The argument, therefore, drawn from the passage against infant baptism is a pure sophism, by which children, not in the premises, are dragged into the conclusion, and which, though destitute of force, has a specious appearance that may impose upon superficial thinkers. Besides, according to the unsound explanation adopted by our opponents, the verse

* II. Thess. iii. 8.

necessarily teaches that no child dying in infancy can be saved, and those alone that are baptized can be redeemed. Our readers will now understand why some maintain that "baptism secures the pardon of sins, and is generally necessary to salvation." These dangerous and Popish tenets are the legitimate consequences of their misinterpretations of the Word of God. To inform us that "children are saved by another gospel," is language that, being contrary to the Scriptures, we do not comprehend. Paul says, Gal. i. 8, "But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached, let him be accursed." This is an awful condemnation, uttered by an inspired Apostle, and should convince every reasonable mind that there is but one method of salvation for old and young. On this momentous theme, we choose "to obey God rather than man," though we should be denounced, by our misguided brethren, as being "void of piety to pursue the path of duty."

3d. The baptism of adults, as recorded in the New Testament, is, with great confidence, produced against administering the rite to children. This very convenient and unsound method of settling the question satisfies many of our opponents who can give no better reason for their practice. They read that adult converts from Jews and Gentiles were baptized; their knowledge of the subject is partial; they conclude that their baptism in infancy is insufficient; submit to be immersed; and generally become violent partizans. Among the cases mentioned, several households are specified, as those of Lydia, the jailor, Stephanas, and Cornelius. It was evidently the common practice of the Apostles to do what our opponents do not—in the same period of time and in similar circumstances, to admit households into the church of Christ by baptism, just as they had been received by circumcision under the former economy. The families here narrated are merely a specimen, and are mentioned because there

was something particularly worthy of notice in their case. We might answer all our opponents' arguments drawn from these households to prove the exclusion of children, by one brief reply, namely, These cases prove that believing adults were baptized, but do not prove that children were not baptized. To prove that the parent has received the ordinance, is surely no evidence that his infants have not been blest with the same privilege. To say that a man worships God in his family, by praise, reading the Scriptures, and prayer, is not unquestionable evidence that he has no children, or if he has, that they do not, because not specially named, engage in the divine homage. Why, then, will our opponents, in glaring violation of all sound reasoning, insist that because parents were baptized, they either had no children, or these were not baptized? The Unitarians argue in exactly a similar manner respecting the divinity of our blessed Lord. They prove what is confessed, that Christ was human, and then proudly conclude that he was not divine! By such a process of detaching Scripture from Scripture, the Bible may, *apparently*, be made to prove the wildest fancies.

We are asked, "What evidence is on record that children were in these households?" Our opponents are bound, in supporting their system, to prove that none but adults were in these houses. *We* do not require to state the precise ages of the individuals under one roof. It is sufficient for our purpose that the very terms house and household embrace every member, irrespective of their age or stature; nay, the first especially applies generally to persons of tender years, and when children ceased to be in nonage, they were commonly called "sons and daughters." But, irrespective of the meaning of these words, we fall back upon the promises of the Old Testament, with their declared fulfilment in the New, as conclusive evidence that if infants were in these households, they were, as in ancient times, and after the avowed faith and

the reception of their parents, entitled to the initiatory ordinance of the Church. The law of admission is neither narrowed nor abrogated, though the form is changed ; and we are therefore bound to believe that, if there were children in these households, they were baptized after their parents. The common condition of families, and the known practice of the Apostles in baptizing so many, warrant the belief that children, being as numerous then as now, formed a part of most, if not of all, of those admitted into the bosom of the Church. It is, however, from other portions of revelation, and not because these households were baptized, that we argue for the children's claims to the rite. The baptism of households, therefore, merely *exemplifies* the mode in which the Apostles fulfilled "the promise" to believers and their offspring.

The faith of Lydia and the jailor is alone mentioned as connected with the baptism of their households. Mr. Noel "*assumes*" that the other members believed, else they would not have been baptized. In opposition to his assumption we place "the sure promises" of God ; and we are as confident that we are right as when we believe, from other commands of Scripture, that parents are bound to support their infant offspring. A divine precept has been already quoted from II. Thes. iii. 8. But we would deem the man a very unwise and unsafe expositor of truth who should argue, from this Apostolic injunction, that, because adults alone are addressed, these adults could have no children ; or, adults alone can work, and none should eat unless they work ; but children cannot work, therefore, children should not eat ! Yet such is precisely the mode of reasoning by which our opponents conclude there were no children in the families of Lydia and the jailor ; or, if there were, they were baptized upon their actual faith personally expressed. It is true, when we lawfully appeal to the Old Testament Scriptures for the rights

of infants, they deny us this liberty, which they so frequently employ on their own behalf, and Dr. Carson exclaims, "Talk not of circumcision." But since the Bible, whose precepts we are bound at our peril to carry out, speaks of it and of "promises" also; and since "the promise" was to *both* adults and their children, our opponents are rightfully required to produce an explicit statement that children in these households were not baptized, or cease to revile us when we obey the full counsel of God.

The words house, household, and "all his," embrace, in their usual acceptation, the whole members of a family, whatever be their age. When they apply to adults, and not to children, the limitation must be expressed, else the reader is led astray. It is said that "believing households" only are specified by the Apostles. The phrase "believing households," which has imposed upon so many, is of human origin, and is not in the Bible. No doubt the adults believed, if there were any under the roofs of Lydia and the jailor; but, since we read of *their* faith alone, the inference is fair that the baptism of the other individuals, who were incapable of expressing their faith, followed as a matter of course. Our opponents "*assume*" that they were all persons of mature years, possessing and expressing faith; the Bible does not say that they were. Upon their own principles of reasoning, therefore, adult-baptists must either confess that in these households adults were baptized without faith, or must concede to us—what is the plain understanding of the cases—that children were baptized who could not declare their faith. Nor do they remove their difficulty when they "*infer*," from other parts of Scripture, that the baptized individuals believed; for, we first demand proof that all the members of these households were adults, and we are then prepared to prove, by inspiration itself, that children were entitled to baptism. Indeed, whenever we are informed

of the reception of the parents, we know that their children—if they have any, and if we believe that “the promise” is fulfilled—are necessarily understood as claiming and enjoying the same privilege.

We are reminded of the following circumstances, which, say our antagonists, render it impossible that children could be in these households. 1st, The jailor, Acts xvi. 34, “believed with all his house.” Children, it is said, could not believe; therefore, he had none. Now, it is *not* stated in the original that all his house believed. His faith alone is mentioned, and the passage is properly rendered: “he, believing in God, rejoiced over his family.” Why did he rejoice? Because they were now blessed with the light of the gospel. When we say that a family are faithful followers of Christ, does not the language distinctly imply that the older members have faith, and abound in its fruits, whilst the youngest child is being trained by instructions, prayers, and example, in the law and love of Jesus? No man, except one prone to be captious, would ever understand the words as necessarily implying the exclusion of children; much less would he found upon them a religious practice, and then denounce those who receive them in their common acceptation, as perverters of the truth of God. 2d, The house of Stephanas, 1st Cor. xvi. 15, “addicted themselves to the ministry of the saints.” Children, we are told, cannot so devote themselves, therefore, no infants were in that house. This, which approaches an absurdity, is admitted by many as argument—sound and legitimate reasoning. When we read that “All the families of the children of Israel were to eat the passover with their loins girded, and their shoes on their feet, and their staff in their hand,” must we really understand there could, by no possibility, be infants in any of these families because they can neither gird their loins, put on shoes, nor hold a staff? Yet this absurd reasoning would be as sound in the one case as in the other. The passage applied

to the house of Stephanas, simply means that he and those under his charge employed themselves in advancing the gospel ; or rather, in succouring the afflicted and destitute. Are we, then, to believe that, whenever a family is characterized for benevolence, devotion, and readiness to relieve the distressed, there *must* be in it no little ones ? No : for the hand of childhood, taught by the lips of kindly parents, may, as well as that of old age, minister the crust of bread which relieves the gnawings of hunger. 3d, Cornelius, Acts x. 2, "feared God with all his house." Children, we are informed, cannot fear God, therefore, none were in his house. To say that a family is "God-fearing" is phraseology familiar to every one ; and no child, unless biassed by previous tuition, would suppose that the house must, of necessity, contain no young ones. Rather would he conclude that its hearth was cheered by these "olive plants," whose condition was a happy one. Joshua and his house were to serve the Lord ; infants cannot serve him ; were there in it therefore, no children ? Yes : for the tender lips may cry "Hosannah," when mature ones are silent, and when aged hearts beat with malice.

To argue that no children were in these households, because, as some think, they are not specially named, is to assume the first point to be proved, and is contrary to the common meaning of the word ; to affirm that, if children existed, they were not baptized, is to gainsay the plainest teachings and the whole tenor of the Bible. The specious arguments of our opponents may catch the unwary and simple-minded, may even deceive the well meaning ; but can lead no one astray who takes the entire statutes of God as the men of his counsel. A man's house, or household, properly signifies all under his charge, whatever be their respective ages ; and the fact of the baptism of infants is, according to every rule of rational construction, implied in these words. The disputant who pertinaciously believes there were no children in

the numerous families baptized by the Apostles, who constructs on that belief a religious creed, who forgets that the promises were to us and our children, and who condemns us for "making void the law of God,"* is in a state of mind which we compassionate, and do not envy.

Our Saviour's baptism, which is likewise produced with great confidence, requires a more particular notice. We are not obliged to consider the nature of John's baptism, nor how far his and that ordained by Jesus agree and differ. It is with his personal baptism we are concerned, and to what extent its mode is an exact pattern for his followers to imitate. Now, faith and repentance, it is said, are indispensably necessary to baptism; but Christ could have neither repentance for sin, nor that faith which saves from guilt. He could not, by his baptism, be cleansed from any moral or ceremonial turpitude, nor could repentance be mixed with it. He believed in God as his Father, and not like us, who are sinners; repent he could not, for he "was holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners." His baptism was thus either no baptism, or the argument of our opponents is false: but he was truly baptized, and there must be at least one exception from this felt and declared faith and repentance. His baptism, therefore, cannot be an exact model for ours. To meet this fatal objection to the system we are combating, we are told that he was baptized as our representative: and, being in the sinner's stead, he is baptized as if he were a transgressor.† Be it so. If he were so baptized, why does he not confess as if he were a sinner? If he was baptized as the representative of adults in whom faith and repentance are necessary—which he did not possess—why not also for children, by whom these gifts cannot be displayed, since he himself was without them? If he was baptized for the one party, why not for the other? for both must be redeemed by his vicarious sufferings. Were he

* Baptism, 171. † Baptism, 171.

the special representative of the one class, to the exclusion of the other, it is most natural to suppose that the favoured party would be infants, who cannot make a declaration of faith and penitence, seeing that he himself made no declaration. The supposition, however, that Christ was baptized as the representative of adults, and not of children, is the creature of human ingenuity, formed to obviate a difficulty, and, like all similar inventions, only involves its contriver in deeper troubles. Christ came, and acted, and suffered as the representative of the redeemed, whether old or young, and it is presumptuous in man to make distinctions where the Bible declares there is none.

His baptism is recorded in Mat. iii. 16—"And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water." There is here not the slightest allusion to his age, or mode of baptism. It is said, however, that he was then about thirty years old, and therefore none but adults should be baptized. This is man's application of a fact, entirely unwarranted by the Scriptures. There is no more intimation in the sacred text that our Saviour's conduct should be so employed, than that none should live after reaching thirty-four years of age, and that crucifixion should be their mode of death. But if they will, without a vestige of authority, so employ this incident in our Lord's life, then none should be baptized before or after thirty years of age, and the Jordan should be the baptizing-place. Besides, certain parties usually say, when the immersed individual rises from under the water, "You have now fulfilled all righteousness." This is a palpable misapplication of the language of the Bible, if it be not something worse. Can the sacred volume, then, supply the necessary and correct explanation of Christ's words and conduct? It teaches three things. 1st, He came as the "High Priest of our profession;"* and

* Heb. iii. 1.

his priestly office is one of the most blessed features in his mediatorial character. Dr. Carson affirms that the idea of his being a priest "is extravagantly absurd." This is a most serious charge against the Spirit of God, who says, "Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec."* Jesus was not consecrated by his baptism, as a Levitical priest, for he came to establish his own priesthood. On this interesting subject the Bible abounds with proof, which no sophistry can set aside. 2d, No priest commenced his public ministrations until he was thirty years of age. In this arrangement, there was reason as well as law; for a man's powers, mental and physical, are then fully developed, and should be entirely under the government of enlightened experience. 3d, No high priest entered upon his official duties until he was ceremonially purified—baptized, if some will have it so—which was first performed by Moses, when "he *poured* of the anointing oil upon Aaron's *head*, and anointed him, to sanctify him."† Here we have a trustworthy model of Christ's consecration to his public labours; and all such regulations, not being unmeaning enactments, taught the necessity of "good order" in the service of God.

Our opponents, in their furious declamations on this topic, forget that Christ's kingdom was not yet fully set up; that the old ceremonial law was not yet completely removed, and a new and a better established in its room; and that the work of removal was now commenced. Our Saviour was presented in the temple according to the law of Moses; he ordered his followers to observe that law; and he partook with them of the paschal lamb immediately before his crucifixion. When he entered upon his public labours, he *began* to establish his kingdom, and his baptism was the initiatory act. He organized that kingdom after his resurrection, but its laws came into full operation after his ascension. Christ fulfilled "all

* Heb. vii. 17.

† Lev. viii. 12.

righteousness," therefore, in fulfilling, not destroying, the law and the prophets ; and as Moses set Aaron apart for his responsible avocation, so did John "prepare the way of the Lord" for his unequalled work. Both Moses, and John who was a priest, were specially appointed of God for their task : the one to initiate a line of mortal priests, the other to consecrate that High Priest who is "the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever."* In this respect, as in other matters, "Among them that are born of women there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist."†

Whilst children are as obviously embraced by the words of institution, in Mat. xxviii. 19, as if they had been specially named, Christ's treatment of them is decisive proof that they were generally in attendance upon his ministry. Having repeatedly adduced them as our examples for conversion and preparation for the kingdom of heaven, he took them up in his arms, blessed them, and fondled them in his brotherly bosom. Is it for nothing that they are so prominently brought forward as our patterns, and that three of the evangelists stop in their narrative to record the incident ? How deep his sympathy for them ! how amazing his love ! Nay, he distinctly affirms that they constitute a part of his kingdom : "For of such is the kingdom of God."‡ How explicit and emphatic are his terms ! Not that the kingdom consists exclusively of such ; nor that it is formed of adults alone who are childlike in their temper and disposition ; but they are in the kingdom, so that they, and such as they, are its subjects. He thus places them in his kingdom, whilst men cast them out ; and if they were members of his kingdom, they must have received that initiatory rite by which, alone, they could become members of it. They were, therefore, *in* his kingdom. To make that kingdom consist of persons like them, whilst they themselves formed no part of it, would be as in-

* Heb. xiii. 8.

† Mat. xi. 11.

‡ Mark x. 14.

correct as to make a man, who is the native of one country, a fair specimen of the inhabitants of another. An individual is the best example of the English character because he is an Englishman, and these children were specimens of the subjects of Christ's kingdom, because they were members of it. They are, and can be, thus, fit patterns for elder subjects, just because they are already in his kingdom, as a native Frenchman or Englishman, enjoying his rights and the largest number of national peculiarities, is the best specimen of his countrymen. Of this privilege they can be fairly deprived by no critical quibble, nor partizan conjecture. It is an abuse of verbal criticism, and of the evident sense of the passage, to tell us that to be genuine subjects of his kingdom we must resemble children, whilst they themselves are foreigners. Having received the initiatory rite into the privileges of his kingdom, Jesus proclaims them his, and men, handing them over to Satan, inflict on them a most serious evil in thus casting them out from that of which Christ declares they form a part?

A blessing, too, is promised for our compassion to them, and cities were of old saved on their account. We are cautioned against offending the least of them; a heavy curse is denounced for inflicting on them an injury; and the heaviest wrong is to unchurch and rob them of their privileges. We are enjoined, in terms almost identical with the words of institution, to receive them *in*, or *into* his name. His own statement is: "Whosoever shall receive this child in my name, receiveth me; and whosoever shall receive me, receiveth him that sent me: for he that is least among you all, the same shall be great."* This must have been a little child, for Jesus, according to Mark ix. 36, took him in his arms; and what he says, not being peculiar to this infant, is common to all other children. He does not here speak of

* Luke ix. 48.

them as needing attention and support ; nor does he institute a new ordinance respecting them : they had long enjoyed their religious privileges ; and he simply introduces them as already connected with the Church of God. Now, to receive a person is to treat him suitably to his age, station, and character. A person is received in the name of Christ when he is treated as one belonging to Christ, and in visible union with the Saviour. We receive a foreign plenipotentiary in the name of his sovereign, because he is connected with that sovereign, being invested by him with certain powers and privileges, and the honours which he receives are proportioned to the station of his master, whilst to insult the one is to offend the other. Hence Jesus says, Mat. x. 40, "He that receiveth you, receiveth me ; and he that receiveth me, receiveth him that sent me." The Apostles were thus to be received according to their office and relation to their Lord ; and Christ is to be received suitably to his dignity and relation to the Father. Whoever, therefore, receives a child in Christ's name, or as in visible union with him, receives Christ himself, and confesses that he is the visible head of the Church. The only reason which can be assigned for such conduct is, that children, being long before constituted a part of his church, are, under the new dispensation, to enjoy the same place and privileges.

The continuance of the religious connection between children and parents is evidently implied in the commands, "Children, obey your parents in all things, for this is well-pleasing unto the Lord ;"* "Fathers, provoke not your children to wrath ; but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord."† These reciprocal duties of receiving and imparting instruction, of obedience and affection, must begin with the dawn of reason, and are acceptable unto the Lord, because believing households, being his dedicated ones, are

* Col. iii. 20.

† Eph. vi. 4.

still in his covenant. Christ himself "shall gather the lambs with his arm, and carry them in his bosom ;"* but men strive to tear them from his embrace by keeping them out of his Church, until sovereign grace leads them to do personally what parents should have performed, and for which Christian privilege they may, under God, be entirely indebted to strangers. This is surely not bringing their offspring to Jesus, and building them as living stones in his temple.

If Christ's regard for "little ones" be so tender, they, on repeated occasions, proved themselves worthy of his compassion. They sang his praise when, as Zion's King, he entered Jerusalem ; and in reproof to the fault-finding, exclusive adults, he said : " Have ye never read, Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings thou hast perfected praise ?"† The chief priests, the rulers, and the vast multitude of the people, formed a soul-stirring scene, but, of the pressing throng, the children alone obtained his approbation. It is not wonderful, therefore, that he should say : " Suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me ; for of such is the kingdom of heaven." It is not wonderful that he should declare them worthy of admission into heaven, and that such are in glory ; but it is strange that, with such recorded facts, they should, without divine authority, be excluded from his church upon earth. Our opponents may indeed answer, that all the above quotations are no positive evidence of their reception into the church by baptism. These passages, however, constructed on the implied and understood fact that the law of their admission was in full force, are distinctly the opposite of depriving infants of their former privileges, or of excommunicating and consigning them to the world whose tender mercies are cruelty. God took " little ones" into his covenant ; he has never cast them out ; Christ treated them as his subjects ; the apostles, giving proper effect to his promises, followed his

* Isa. xl. 11.

† Mat. xxi. 16.

example: but men, wise, we fear, "above that which is written," rashly undo the work of the Lord.

In reply to the above reasoning, our opponents assert that a person who has a right to a positive institute—which baptism is, must be expressly mentioned as having that right; and they demand a direct precept—that is, one in which children are named—for the admission of infants to the ordinance. Now, it might be supposed that men who profess a rigid adherence to Scripture and sound criticism would never violate their own canons of interpretation. But, so perverse is human nature, that they can argue for the admission of individuals to the Lord's Supper—which is another positive institute—upon *less* Scriptural authority than we produce for the right of children to baptism. We rest the claims of females to the Lord's Table upon their previous baptism, fitness by the grace of God, the nature of the ordinance, the words applied to communicants in the New Testament, and upon the fact that all distinctions between the sexes being now abolished, these are upon as entire an equality as Jew and Gentile are. But there is no express precept for their claims; not even one was present when the ordinance was instituted; nor do we ever read of females, by name, sitting down to the Lord's Table. When, therefore, we rightfully request an express precept on this subject, as our opponents do on the other, do they produce that precept? No: because it is impossible. Some reader, however, may suppose that they will never adopt the same line of argument to prove the claims of females, which they so condemn and ridicule, when employed on behalf of infants. *They adopt that very line of argument.* Does he ask, Why such a glaring inconsistency? We have not yet received a satisfactory answer.

We shall glance at their efforts on this subject—not to weaken the claims of females to their privileges, which rest upon grounds too solid to be shaken, but to strengthen our

own convictions, and, if possible, induce some of our opponents to re-consider and renounce their false system. They tell us that females partook of the Passover, and should, therefore, be admitted to the Lord's Supper; that they are all worthy, and therefore entitled; that the words, "drink ye of it," "disciples," and even "man," embrace females; that we read of their being baptized, and this fact warrants their admission. But all this is to abandon their former line of argument, and to adopt part of ours; is to appeal to the Old Testament for themselves, whilst they condemn us for a like procedure; is to renounce their demand for an express precept, and reason from analogy, presumption, and inference. On behalf of infant and believer baptism, we not merely reason in a similar manner, but produce the direct promises of the Bible, that children and parents were to "be as aforetime;" that the apostles declare these promises were fully realised; that God took both parents and their infants into his Church; that he has never cast either of them out; and that *an unrepealed law remains in all its original force*. Our opponents cannot produce such an amount of unimpeachable evidence in the present case. They strive, however, to adduce Scripture, and we shall look at their proofs.

Mr. Noel, p. 128, produces the sentence, "Drink ye all of it." Now, to whom were these words addressed? To males, and *not* to females. We are not discussing the question whether females are included; we firmly believe that they were; but we are demanding an explicit precept from our opponents, and they produce these words, which equally, in themselves, apply to either males or females! Was there one female present? were not males alone addressed? are females even mentioned? It is an evasion to say that other parts of Scripture support the rights of females. We believe they do; but we request an explicit precept in which females are named, as we are asked for one in which children are specified.

Dr. Carson says, p. 232 ; " That women did eat the Lord's Supper, there is the fullest and most direct evidence." We may now expect decisive proof. We are favoured with Acts, xx. 7.—" And upon the first day of the week, when the *disciples* came together to break bread." He tells us : " Here it is said of the *disciples* without any exception, that they came together to eat the Lord's Supper. If then, women are disciples as well as men, there is here the most direct evidence that they ate the Lord's Supper." We do not dispute the correctness of this exposition ; but we charge the Doctor with inconsistency, and with doing both the Bible and us an injury, when he thus reasons by *inference*, from the word " disciples," which may, or may not, include females, and when he resists the application to children, as well as to parents, of the promises in the Old with their fulfilment in the New Testament, because, as he supposes, children are not named, though they are as specially mentioned as they could be by human language. The Doctor can produce for female communion no evidence so explicit and direct as we can advance for infant baptism : " The promise is unto you and to your children."

For a twofold purpose, the same writer, p. 180, adduces Acts, viii. 12,—" But when they believed Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women." He tells us, " Only they who believed are said to have been baptized." Possibly it was so. Who denies that believing converts are entitled to baptism ? We also baptize such ; yet our opponents perpetually confound things which are perfectly distinct, and unfairly represent the baptism of believing adults, though it is *not* the point in debate, as the whole question. The promise is to both parents and children ; and to prove that the former of these enjoyed their privilege is *no* evidence that the latter were denied the same rite. He

says: "Had the account said nothing of women, yet it would have included them as believers; and the commission would have extended to them." We not only plead in a similar manner regarding the baptism of infants, but prove from Scripture that the original commission to baptize "included" and of necessity "extended" to children, because "The promise is to you and your children,"—a promise, the privileges of which "the households" of our opponents never enjoy, and which were conferred upon so many by the Apostles. He adds: "Now, is it not remarkable that the Holy Spirit should be so precise as to women, yet not say a word of infants?" It is *not* remarkable unless a man wishes to make it so. The Spirit had been already "precise" respecting children, and there was no necessity for their being again named. He is under no obligation, merely to satisfy the arbitrary "canons" of controversialists, to repeat the word *infants*, every time that these are evidently "included." Nor is it "remarkable" that females should be specified as enjoying the ordinance of baptism. They had formerly been *excluded* from the initiatory rite into the Church; and it was absolutely necessary, therefore, that they should be specially named, as being henceforward upon an equality with males. A new class of persons was now admitted to a religious privilege, and the Spirit kindly secures their rights by explicit terms. In all this there is nothing "remarkable," for it is his usual mode of procedure. The Scriptures thus plainly inform us that females were baptized; but it is by *inference* alone that their claims to the Lord's Supper can be established.

We have again, I. Cor., xi. 28. "But let a *man* examine himself, and so let him eat," &c. Here Mr. Booth says: "Does not the term *anthropos* (man) often stand as a name of our species, without regard to sex?" Now an express warrant must rest upon an express word which specifies the

sex ; as in Acts, viii. 12.—“ They were baptized, both men (*andres*) and women (*gunaikes*).” The word *anthropos* (man) is *not* an express word for woman, and Mr. Booth’s explicit warrant is therefore a mere fiction. This he proves himself ; for he merely says that the word “ often stands,” not always, “ as a name of our species :” it is, therefore *no* explicit warrant. He summons to his aid lexicographers and common sense—both of which are denied to us. But the word is found in the Greek Testament a hundred times, where the female sex cannot be included, and even where it distinguishes the male from the female. Is the word *man* an explicit term for a woman ? neither is *anthropos* ; and if this kind of argument be without force here, it must be equally so against infant baptism. Both the words and the circumstances in which they are employed must decide their meaning. For instance, Eph., v. 31.—“ For this cause shall a man (*anthropos*) leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife.” Can there be any doubt here that the word is distinctive of the *male* sex ? Let this suffice for Mr. Booth’s explicit warrant for female communion, drawn from this word, and for his unsuccessful efforts to pass unsound criticism upon the public for explicit proof. He does for female communion what we need to do for neither that communion nor for infant baptism ; he misinterprets an important word, and thereby misrepresents the Scriptures.

But why this discussion ? Because our opponents know that they cannot maintain their arguments against infant baptism, if they fail to produce an explicit warrant for the admission of females to the Lord’s Table, and they strain every nerve to prove that they have such a warrant. We have shortly considered their labours, applied their own principles of reasoning against infant baptism to their arguments for female communion, and have seen that their efforts are signal failures. We rejoice in the right of females to partici-

pate in all the ordinances of the Gospel ; but we likewise rejoice that the claims of children to baptism are based upon grounds at least as secure ; and we place the claims of both parties upon a better foundation than that of our opponents.

Children were not carelessly thrown out of the early Church of Jesus. The evidence of the fathers of the Church may, on existing practices, be unimpeachable ; but what the Bible teaches respecting baptism and regeneration, we are as competent to judge as the ancients were ; and the abuses, too soon connected with the administration of baptism, do not affect the question in debate. Whatever diversity of opinion might prevail among these fathers on doctrinal subjects, they were, on infant baptism, *unanimous and explicit*. They uniformly speak of baptism being to Christians in the stead of circumcision, and thus found upon the latter an argument for infant baptism. For instance, Justin Martyr, who lived only forty years after the apostles, says : “ We have not received the carnal circumcision, but the spiritual circumcision. And we have received it by baptism.” “ Many males and females among us, of sixty and seventy years old, *who were made disciples to Christ from their childhood*, do continue uncorrupted.” No other fair interpretation can be put upon his words, than that they were discipled and baptized in their childhood. Justin uses the very same word, “ were discipled,” which Matthew employed in expressing our Saviour’s command,* and the act of making these disciples was done in their childhood. Matthew wrote about fifteen years after Christ’s ascension, and Justin wrote about ninety after Matthew. The parties, therefore, who were “ seventy years old,” having been made disciples to Christ in their childhood, must have been discipled during the apostles’ times, and only about thirty-six years after the ascension of our Saviour !

* Mat. xxviii. 19.

Irenæus lived sixty-seven years after the apostles, and was born shortly before the death of John. He says : " Infants, and little ones, and children, and youths, and elder persons, were regenerated unto God," which he afterwards explains by their being baptized. By these writers, baptism and regeneration were frequently used for each other, not that they considered the words exactly synonymous, but because the former symbolized the latter ; and perhaps they attached more importance to the rite than the Scriptures warrant. This author was reared in Asia, probably by Christian parents, and knew Polycarp well, who was the intimate acquaintance of John and of others who had seen our Lord. At a time so nigh the apostles, and in a place where John had so lately lived, he had the best opportunities of being correctly informed as to the baptizing or not baptizing of infants.

Tertullian flourished about a hundred years after the apostles. Much, by our opponents, has been made of his testimony ; with what justice a few words will show. Does he deny that children were baptized upon the authority of Christ ? No ; though he himself was baptized in adult age. He simply pleads for delaying their baptism, lest they should afterwards apostatize, or those responsible for their religious training should fail to implement their engagements, as he also urged the delay of " unmarried persons, those that never were married, and those in widowhood," lest they should, after their baptism, be drawn into temptation. As a special plea for delaying the baptism of infants, he teaches that they were sinless, and needed not the forgiveness of sins, supposed to be granted in this ordinance. The fact of infant baptism he admits, and reasons upon it as an existing universal practice, just as those, who deny our obligations to observe the Christian Sabbath, take its existence for granted and reason against it as a well known fact. Our opponents, therefore,

might as well deny that the Sabbath exists, because some would destroy its sacred obligations and duties, as deny the existence of infant baptism, because Tertullian pleads for delay.

Origen flourished a hundred and ten years after the apostles. He was talented, pious, well-informed, and born of Christian parents, his father being a martyr for Christ in the persecution under Severus, when Origen was seventeen years old. He was born and educated in Alexandria; but he had travelled much, having lived in Greece, Rome, Cappadocia, Arabia, Syria, and Palestine. His knowledge, therefore, of the ordinances of the Church, and their mode of administration, must have been extensive and correct. His testimony is plain, not only pre-supposing the existence and practice of infant baptism, but that it was ordered by the apostles. He says: "The Church hath received an order (a tradition) from the apostles to give baptism to infants." This explicit evidence needs no comment.

Cyprian, forty years later, bears a similar testimony. In a council of sixty-six overseers of the Church, held at Carthage, the question was introduced by one Fidus, and discussed by the council, not whether infants were entitled to baptism—for that was universally allowed and acted on—but whether a child, male or female, might be baptized before the eighth day, the time when the Jewish males were circumcised. The council were unanimous that a child might be baptized immediately after its birth; and they sum up their judgment by stating, "that the spiritual circumcision ought not to be restrained by the circumcision which was according to the flesh." We have here distinct proof that the practice of infant baptism was universal; that the practice was founded on the Word of God; and that baptism—or Christian circumcision—was then as commonly believed to have taken the place of the Jewish ordinance.

Gregory Nazienzen, two hundred and sixty years after the apostles, exhorts men of all ranks to devote themselves and their children to Christ by an early baptism. Augustin, a man of great note in the Church, was ninety years later than Cyprian. He contended against several violent heretics in a dispassionate and Scriptural manner, which evinced his deep piety, extensive knowledge, and soundness in the faith, and which commanded the respect of even his antagonists. This competent witness says: "The whole Church practises infant baptism; it was not instituted by councils, but was always in use;" and he asserts that he does not remember any heretic who denied this. No testimony could be more explicit.

But Pelagius, who denied original sin and the necessity of Divine grace for our doing good works, flourished three hundred and seventeen years after the apostles. He was a Briton by birth, and lived much in Jerusalem. He was charged, it would seem, with also denying the sacrament of baptism to infants. He styles this charge a slander, and declares that he "never heard, no not even any wicked heretic say, that children should not be baptized." It was this man's interest, in supporting his dogmas on original sin and the grace of God, to deny the right of children to baptism, for his belief on this subject was urged against his notions on other matters; yet such is the direct evidence which he gives. A testimony voluntarily and explicitly tendered in these circumstances, must be impartial and valuable.

Much more to the same purpose, from the writings of distinguished individuals and decrees of Councils, might be produced; but surely more is not required. The sum of the whole matter is this: for four hundred years after the apostles, none ever denied the right of children to be baptized; for the next seven hundred years, no individual, no

society, ever pleaded for even the delay of baptism : in A.D. 1120, one sect of the Waldenses refused to baptize children, because it was believed that they were incapable of salvation ; in A.D. 1522, the refusal of baptism to infants made its appearance among the Mennonites, and has had its adherents ever since.

Combine now these things together : 1. Children were once connected with the Church of God ; 2. The continued connection between parents and children was foretold, and never has been disturbed ; 3. There is not the slightest intimation in the Scriptures that infants were to be excluded from their ancient rights and privileges, but statements to the contrary of this as definite as circumstances demanded ; 4. Christ carried out the predictions of Scripture, and the expectations of the people respecting the admission of old and young, male and female, into the Church of God ; 5. The apostles acted upon the spirit and letter of their Master's instructions ; 6. For 1120 years, the Church of Christ universally admitted children to baptism upon the authority of the Bible, and not upon the decrees of either Popes or Councils. For what other Bible doctrine or practice, as originally delivered to the saints, is there a greater amount of clear, consecutive, and overwhelming evidence ? We can, therefore, afford to be denounced—if men will so dishonour themselves—as incompetent to judge, or destitute “of piety to pursue the path of duty.” We may bless God, that our convictions and piety are not under the control of some individuals. Let us, however, return blessing for railing, and pray that the sins of others may be forgiven, as we hope that God, for Christ's sake, hath pardoned ours. Let us never forget to whom we are so deeply indebted for all the institutions of our holy faith, and the blessings, present and future, which these symbolize. May the love of God be “shed abroad in our hearts, by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.”

BAPTISM.

FOURTH LECTURE;

BY

THE REV. W. RITCHIE,

BERWICK-ON-TWEED.

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ERRATA.

In 4th page, 9th line from top, for *bebarred* read *debarred*.

In 6th page, last line, for *as* read *is*.

BAPTISM.

"And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water; and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him."—Mat. iii. 16.

OUR opponents frequently assert, that the conversion and baptism of adults, as these are recorded in the New Testament, are entirely and conclusively on their side of the question. Perhaps this unwarrantable assertion, though it has not the most remote bearing upon the point at issue, has, more than any one thing else, made converts to their cause. *The baptism of adults is common to both parties.* But the word "household" embraces individuals of every age; and the term "house," or the phrase "his own," generally means a person's family, of which children form a principal part. It is therefore the incumbent duty of our antagonists to show that these words, as employed in the Acts, exclude children, by having an unusual and special meaning. This task, essential to the stability of their system, they attempt to evade by assuming what they are bound to prove. They suppose there might be no children in these houses, and then either reason

as if, or positively affirm that, there were none. We understand the terms in their common acceptation, and rightfully require adult-baptists to prove that, in the cases specified, they cannot be so applied. It is conveniently alleged that, because adults were baptized, children were not; as if when a man has a feast in his house, and his name alone is mentioned, we must necessarily conclude that he has no children, or if he has, that they, though on previous occasions they uniformly shared in the enjoyment, were bebarred from participating in the festivity! The individual who is convinced by such a line of argument, must be easy of belief.

Our main object at present is to prove that immersion is not the Scriptural mode of baptism. In the application of water, as a cleansing element, consists the appropriateness of the rite. That cleansing is effected through the agency of the Holy Ghost, whose influences are, throughout the Scriptures, represented as being poured out and descending from on high. This is the mode of applying the thing signified, and such *only* should be the mode of applying the symbol. Immersionists, therefore, may have correctly the general conception of the ordinance, and their mode may suffice without repetition—just as we would admit that a member of the Papal Church, who had partaken of the bread alone in the Lord's Supper, could not be said never to have communicated at all; but as to the particular manner prescribed by the Bible for administering the ordinance, our opponents have not yet been faithful; and they should relinquish, as inconvenient, deficient, and superstitious, a practice which is not found in the Bible.

We do not affirm dogmatically that immersion is sinful. But, since it is countenanced by no portion of the sacred volume, it cannot be Christian baptism; and "to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin." The Word of God is revealed for the instruction of young and old,

rich and poor, learned and unlearned ; and this vision is so plain, " that he may run that readeth it."* If, therefore, a doctrine or practice—as immersion—must be deduced from the Scriptures by the niceties of verbal criticism with which so few are acquainted, and does not plainly appear on the surface of that revelation ; if, to expound the Bible in any particular way, an appeal must be made to classical authors with whom not one in ten thousand is conversant ; if, to support that exposition, Talmudical fables and heathenish practices must be called in : all this is strong presumptive evidence against the soundness of that interpretation. *The Scriptures must explain their own meaning.* We do not repudiate the assistance of classical writers, though we disown their authority to dictate ; they may be employed as servants, cannot be admitted as masters ; they may form the conclusion, not the starting point, of our investigations. Homer, Theocritus, &c., may be sufficient authorities to determine the meaning of Greek terms and customs, but are incompetent to expound Divine revelation ; nor can they afford any assistance in proving the exact meaning of a Greek word, when applied to interpret a language, and express an ordinance, unknown in their country. How far they can avail in the present controversy, we may afterwards have occasion to consider ; but to make them impart heat and vitality to " the word of life," is to burn strange fire in our censers. Our opponents commence with the heathen, and end with the apostles. Thus reversing the natural order of investigation, and beginning where they should end, are the rocks on which they are shipwrecked.

Immersion is plunging the whole body under water. This act, performed by one man to another, and as a public religious ceremony, is utterly unknown in the Bible. It is commonly deduced from five Greek words, *en, eis, apo, ek,* and *baptiso*. These words are used in connection with administer-

* Hab. ii. 2.

ing the ordinance of baptism, and any of them, or at least the whole combined, are deemed by our opponents conclusive that immersion alone is the proper mode. On the contrary, we shall endeavour to prove that they warrant no such conclusion, and shall so arrange our evidence, by stripping it, as far as possible, of a foreign aspect, and adopting the Bible as our criterion of judgment, that, without an appeal to Matthiae or any distinguished grammarian for the special meaning of the words, or mode of administering the ordinance of baptism, the most unlearned in classical lore may distinctly understand the subject. By following this method, we sustain no loss, except being prevented from displaying a long list of learned quotations and names, which might give an air of authority, but could add no real strength to our cause. We merely deliver ourselves from the unnecessary burden of extraneous testimony, which we reduce to its proper place, and take our first evidence from the fountain-head of truth.

Another preliminary observation necessary is, that the precise meaning of a word in any given location, must be determined by the circumstances in which it is employed. For instance, a man says that he *travelled* from Edinburgh to London, and we instantly understand that he passed from the one place to the other; but we still require to be informed whether he walked, took coach, the railway, or even the steamer. If, however, he states that he travelled between these cities in twelve hours, we at once infer that the railway was his particular mode of transit, and ask no further explanation. The simple circumstance of time speedily decides the question. Were another individual, in the habit of passing by steamer between these two cities, to maintain that the first person must have also gone by the same conveyance, and to talk, therefore, of travelling over the specified distance in twelve hours as absurd and impossible, we would wonder

what he meant. Exactly so is it with our opponents. They assert that the Greek words have, and can have, only one meaning. This we deny, and produce our proof.

1st. *En*. It is sometimes translated "*in*," as "*in a cave*." In its primary meaning, the word refers to place; but it is more frequently rendered "at, on, with." When it is said, therefore, "were baptized of him *in* Jordan," all that the passage warrants is, that John and his followers were "*at the Jordan*," or, within the region of the river; and the word gives no certain intimation what was done there, nor whether they were in the water or not. When Dr. Carson makes this acknowledgment, who tortures every word to extract a confession in his favour, we may be assured that its evidence cannot be more specific; and his concession may rebuke the less learned, though equally violent of his party. He says: "There are instances, indeed, in which we cannot trace the primary idea."* We give another more decisive quotation, respecting Ulysses, who was out of the water, and watched a whole night *in* the river; the Italics are ours: "He might be in the river, yet not in the water; *all within the banks is the river*."† This he illustrates by I. Kings, xvii. 5, where Elijah, we are told, "went and dwelt *by (in)* the brook Cherith;" and he asks, "Could not the prophet take up his residence within the banks of the brook?" Yes; and hence he was *at*, not *in* the Cherith. Why, then, after this direct statement, should there be a contest between us? Our opponents admit all that we require respecting the word, and even more than is necessary for our cause. We cheerfully concede that the parties were "*within the banks*," or, perhaps, were actually in the water. What we assert is, that the word, so various are its applications, gives only the certain evidence that John and his disciples were *at* the Jordan, or "*within the banks*," which they might be whilst their feet never touched the stream.

* Baptism, 121. † Ibid. 339.

Immersionists would translate Mat. iii. 11,—“I indeed plunge you in water into repentance, he shall plunge you in the Holy Ghost and in fire.” This translation is not merely harsh and unscholar-like, but is contrary to fact. The believer is not plunged in the Holy Ghost; for that divine agent is uniformly represented as descending upon the believer. To our opponents this difficulty is insurmountable. Dr. Carson endeavours to evade the charge of violating Scripture phraseology in this matter, by declaring that the Spirit cannot descend, because he is everywhere present; and to represent him as coming down, is to make him a material being, requiring to move from one place to another. But, in opposition to such speculations, Christ walked in Eden “in the cool of the day;” “God looked upon the earth, and, behold, it was corrupt;” when the tower of Babel was being built, “the Lord came down to see the city and the tower. And the Lord said, Go to, let us go down, and there confound their language;” when he was about to emancipate Israel from Egyptian bondage, he said, “I am come down to deliver them;” he said; “I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh;” John “saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him;” “While Peter yet spake these words the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word;” “And when Paul had laid his hands upon them the Holy Ghost came on them.” The Bible abounds with similar expressions, which are never misunderstood except for party purposes. In condescension to our weak capacities, the Scriptures thus speak in human language of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, to impart a faint conception of the Divine nature, attributes, perfections, and operations. We can neither be plunged into the Spirit, nor have him literally poured down upon us; but he is represented as being poured out upon the nations, to give us some idea of his mode of communication, and the pouring of water in baptism is the symbol of that

mode. The language, therefore, is not ours ; it is the Lord's ; and to find fault with it, or to call it " a blasphemous error,"* is to impeach his infinite wisdom.

The Greek word, " en," corresponds with the Hebrew letter, " beth," and is used in the Greek version of the Old Testament, where it can by no possibility signify "*in*." We read in Num. xx. 20, that Edom came out against the Hebrews " with much people, and with a strong hand ;" it cannot be "*in* much people, and *in* a strong hand." Jephthah's daughter " met him with timbrels, and with dances ; it cannot be "*in* timbrels, and *in* dances." Let this suffice for proof, that from the word itself, apart from collateral circumstances, nothing conclusive can be drawn, beyond the fact, that *in* Jordan means *at* Jordan. But even granting that it invariably signified *in*, it gives no certain information how far they were in the stream, nor what was done there ; for a man may surely be in a river, without his being immersed.

2d. *Eis*, or *es*. These are merely different forms of the same word. The proper meaning of this preposition is simply *to*, seldom *in* or *into*. Dr. Carson says, in his reply to Mr. Ewing : " And I am as far from denying that *eis* sometimes signifies *unto*."† A concession from this learned opponent is valuable, though others may be equally competent to judge. To translate this term always *into*, thereby implying immersion, as several of our antagonists would do, gives some curious renderings. In Num. xix. 18, we read, " And a clean person shall take hyssop and dip it *in* the water and sprinkle it upon the tent." Mr. Noel seriously maintains that the hyssop was actually immersed in the water *in* which it is here said to be dipt. This is equivalent to asserting that a painter immerses his brush every time he dips it in the paint or colours ; and that a writer plunges the whole of his pen into the ink whenever he wets the point ! A system

* Baptism, 105. † Baptism, 131.

must be frail when its support requires such an overstretching of language, or rather, such support would injure the best of systems. Part of the hyssop and pen is dipt; a man's feet may be in the water, when he is baptized; yet neither of them is immersed.

Giving *eis* the immersionist rendering in the following passages brings out strange results. "Behold my servant,—*into* whom I am well pleased." "And seeing the multitudes, he went *into* a mountain,"—not surely into the bowels of the hill. "Go thou *into* the sea," was certainly not a command for Peter to plunge into the lake to obtain the fish; he could stand at the margin, or take a boat as he was wont to do, and not a finger might be dipt. Mary "fell down *into* his feet," makes absolute nonsense, at which a smile is suppressed with difficulty. Jesus "went away again beyond Jordan, *into* the place where John at first baptized; and there he abode." Now, John was baptizing both *in* the Jordan and at Bethabara, and stood, according to our friends, so deep in the water that he could easily immerse the applicants; and since Jesus dwelt where John baptized, he must have abode in the water. Our opponents endeavour, by adopting our interpretation of the word, to avoid this legitimate and absurd conclusion from their own principles; but their futile efforts merely evince their ingenuity in changing their mode of reasoning, when their practice is assailed, though they are extremely rigid in demanding a strict adherence, by their assailants, to the laws and canons of criticism. We have sufficiently proved, however, that to render this word uniformly *into*, would make positive nonsense, if not something worse. We are consequently obliged to fall back upon some other and more common-sense principle of interpretation, than that adopted by immersionists. The simple rule is, that the circumstances in which the preposition is found must, *in all cases*, regulate its meaning.

3d. *Apo*. We are told that it signifies *out of*, and nothing else ; so that when a person comes *out of* the water, he must have been immersed. Its proper and common signification is *from*. Dr. Carson also says : " I admit the proper translation of *apo* is *from*, and not *out of*."* The word is, in itself, so indefinite in meaning, that its sense must entirely depend upon the connection in which it is employed. When a man is said to " come *from* the wall," there is no difficulty in understanding what is meant ; but when he is said to come *from* London, we must have further information before we know whether he came from the centre, the opposite side, or environs of the city. When Rebekah " went down to the well, and filled her pitcher, and came up," she evidently came from the edge of the water. Translate it *out of*, in the following passages, and mark the confusion that ensues. " O, generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee *out of* the wrath to come ; Depart *out of* me, ye workers of iniquity ; The kingdom of heaven shall be taken *out of* you : Let him come down *out of* the cross !" Every one must perceive the impropriety of such phraseology, must be convinced that *from* is its legitimate rendering, and that to found an hypothesis of immersion upon the word, is to violate sound interpretation.

4th. *Ek*, or *eks*. These are also different forms of the same word. It is likewise said to mean *out of* ; nothing else ; and the descent of Philip, with the Ethiopian, to the water, and their ascent from it, are deemed conclusive evidence. This is neither its uniform, nor most common meaning. Its primary signification is *out from*, not *out of* ; so that Philip and the eunuch, having gone down *to* (eis,) the water, simply came *out from* the water. The preposition *ek*, in the Greek language, may not be the exact equivalent of *from* in the English, though they may fill the same place in their respective lan-

* Baptism, 126.

guages, and convey the same meaning to their respective nations. When a Greek said that a hero was covered with mud, "*out of the head into the feet*," our expression "from head to foot" is precisely the same ; but no sane man would maintain that *ek* signifies from the *interior* of the head, and *eis* into the interior of the foot. Dr. Carson says : " This is the distinction between *apo* and *ek*. The former denotes the point of departure, in whatever part of the object that point is found ; the latter always supposes that the point of departure is within the object."* We have already seen that *apo*, in the phrase "*from the wall*," must mean a point without, not within the object departed from ; and the Doctor is consequently wrong, when he says that the point of departure is found *in* the object. As a critic, he is equally far from the truth respecting *ek*. In translating the Scriptures, the best words and phrases in the foreign language should be adopted to convey the sense of the original : but whenever the words do not exactly correspond, the Scriptures must determine the sense in which the translation must be understood. Every translation, therefore, must conform to the original, not the latter to the former ; and the Bible must determine its own meaning. Our readers would never understand the following passages were they translated upon immersionist principles. " For the tree is known *out of* his fruit ; He agreed with the labourers *out of* a penny a-day ; Grant that these my two sons may sit, the one *out of* thy right hand, and the other *out of* thy left ; He riseth *out of* supper, and laid aside his garments ; Neither repented they *out of* their murders nor *out of* their sorceries, nor *out of* their fornications, nor *out of* their thefts." No man would ever understand these passages so rendered, and yet such must be their translation, if, as immersionists maintain, the word *ek* must signify *out of*. But we presume that most of our readers are now convinced upon the subject.

* Baptism, 130.

It is not denied that these four prepositions have sometimes the meaning which our opponents claim for them; but it is emphatically denied that they have uniformly, or commonly, that acceptation. Two simple illustrations with which we are perfectly familiar, will close our observations on this department of the discussion. When we speak of a man's going down *to* our river, and coming *up from* it, we clearly understand, unless otherwise informed, that even his foot was not in the water, whilst the phrases *down to* and *up from* are sufficiently accounted for by the fact, that he has banks to descend and ascend, exactly as the people had at the Jordan. Our fishermen, too, go frequently every day *into* the river and *come up out of it*, and never are immersed except by accident, very much against their will, and to their great discomfort. Were an individual, prompted by the immersion mania, to assert, as Dr. Carson does, that in performing their manual labours, and notwithstanding their declarations to the contrary, You daily go "not only *down to the water*, but *into the water*," come up from the water, and out of the water, and this, "to every candid mind must ever prove immersion,"* our worthy fishermen might well be amazed at his weakness and perversity, but would never be convinced that they were immersed. Such is a specimen of the grounds upon which our opponents found their practice!

We have surely now said enough to prove, that whatever conclusion can be drawn from the above prepositions, it is against, not in favour of our opponents. Yet the simple circumstance, that individuals went *down to*, and came *up from* the water, have made several immersionists who have no better reason to assign for their practice and boasted conversion. It would appear that some men are the more tenacious of a creed in proportion to its unsoundness; and that they

* Baptism, 445, 446.

strive to atone for deviating from the plain dictates of Scripture, by an exuberance of vanity, and by their sweeping condemnation of others, to consider whom even as Christians, requires the utmost stretch of their charity. These parties might profitably re-consider the ancient precept: "Let nothing be done through strife or vain glory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than themselves."

5th. *Baptiso*, rendered "baptize." For the want of an English formation, the Greek are merely exchanged for English characters. It is confidently affirmed that this word signifies immersion alone, and finally decides the question. Learned volumes are written upon its classical meaning. Every ancient author has been ransacked by zealous disputants, to ascertain his various uses of the term; and after all, *one* of its meanings has been singled out, and, by applying that meaning to a religious ceremony, an application of it has been forced upon the writers of the New Testament, of which even the heathen themselves were entirely ignorant! It must be distinctly remembered, that the evidence adduced to prove that it necessarily implies immersion, is first and chiefly brought from heathen writers, of whom the Jews at the time of our Saviour knew almost nothing, and whose authority, especially in religious matters, they would have indignantly disowned. In this rejection, there would have been justice. Supposing that the Jews even spoke the Greek language—which, as a nation, they never did—it would be unfair to try them at a foreign tribunal; and it is manifestly unjust to force upon both them and the word a *new* meaning—a religious immersion—to which their sacred ordinances, and the term itself, were complete strangers. The principal point to establish, therefore, is not so much the meaning of the word in its own language, as the new acceptance which it acquires from its being applied to another language, which must dictate its new application; and if that word does

not express exactly what the Hebrew means, this merely proves, either the poverty of the Greek language when applied to Bible ordinances, or that the Greeks possessed no rite corresponding to those recorded in the Hebrew, to which the translating word is now applied.

The Jew would attach his own meaning to the word ; and that meaning would accord with known rites and ceremonies. By this must he be judged ; and here we take our stand. There was not a single rite connected with the Levitical economy, where a public minister publicly immersed, or washed, the entire body of any worshipper, male or female. The law, which enjoined the leper to wash the body in private, applied alike to males and females ; but there is not a single instance where a worshipper immersed, bathed, or washed himself in public. What is Bible duty and practice, therefore, we must determine from the words of Scripture, not from the language and practice of the heathen. Our main task is not to determine by the Hebrew Scriptures the acceptation of a Greek word, in the Greek language, but to ascertain, by the Scriptures, the meaning of that word when applied to a Bible ordinance.

The Greeks had no sacred rite analogous to that of baptism, and *baptiso* was consequently applied to no religious ceremony. But although they had possessed such an institution, the Hebrews would accommodate the term to the nature and requirements of their own divine ordinances. The literal and primary meaning of the term is thus of small service in the controversy. Every one knows that we have adopted many words from various languages, and have so moulded them, changing their pronunciation and meaning to suit our circumstances, that the people to whom they originally belonged cannot recognise their own words in their new and altered position. It would be unjust to maintain that we must understand these terms in their

primary acceptation, and must understand a ceremony, or festival, in a particular way, because it was so understood by those whose words we have adopted and who described it by these terms. The Lord's supper is called "Eucharist" in many countries; in most of them it is differently observed, and it might be an arduous task to prove to which of them the original signification of the word most strictly applies. Hence the necessity of taking the Scriptures, not Greek authors, as our guide; of permitting the Spirit to expound his own revelation; and of thus having an infallible standard of appeal to decide the signification of foreign terms when employed to interpret his meaning.

The term "baptiso" was not formed for the rite of baptism, but was accommodated to that ordinance. We therefore cannot decide, by the Greek word, what that institution is, though we may determine from the Bible what it means when understood by a Hebrew, and applied to an institution of Scripture. The word was not taken from the language of the people, else it must be used in its common sense. Nor was the word ever applied to a religious ceremony among even the Greeks. It is, therefore, a direct appeal to the actual practice of the people, or a sufficient induction from that practice, and not speculations from theory, nor quotations from foreign writers, that can settle a question of this kind. Were the meaning of the original Scriptures to be determined by the meaning of every language into which they are rendered, they would become a mass of confusion to learned and unlearned; but the Bible must be the standard by which these translations are made, and if a word cannot be found to express the exact meaning, the best one is selected, or several are employed. This is, perhaps, the most difficult task that translators have to encounter; for the Bible, not bending its meaning to foreign languages, gives its own meaning to every language into which it is translated. This is sometimes con-

ceded by our opponents, and at others denied. Dr. Carson writes: "The just and most obvious method of ascertaining the meaning of a word, is to examine its origin and use in the language."* This is perfectly correct when the meaning of that word, in its *own* language, is to be ascertained; but when that word is employed to represent the meaning of a term in another language, then this latter word must determine the sense in which the former is used in a translation. The same author again says of a word: "It may wander far from the root, but if that root be known with certainty, the connection may still be traced. The derivative, however, may reject ideas contained in the primitive, or it may receive additional ideas, which can be learned only by being acquainted with its history."† This receiving of "additional ideas," being admitted by our opponents, is exactly what, in the present case, we contend for; and whether the derivative—as "baptiso," which is derived from "bapto"—rejects, or retains, the idea contained in the primitive, must be determined by its history, and, when it is employed in translation, by the meaning of the particular word which it represents in another language. Words frequently depart widely in their use from the meaning of their roots; and few things are more common in the history of words "than to enlarge or diminish their signification,"‡—they often drop some idea that was originally essential, or embrace ideas not originally employed. The etymologist, therefore, quoting his classical authorities, may contend for the canons of criticism and laws of research for the roots of words; but *use* being superior to etymology as a witness on such subjects, is the ultimate and supreme judge. The word "candlestick," for instance, is now as properly applied to an article of gold, as when it originally meant an humble cleft piece of stick into which the candle was fastened. The word

* Baptism, 23. † Baptism, 23, 24. ‡ Baptism, 44.

acre, which, like its Latin root, *ager*, at first meant a field of any extent, has, since the time of Edward the First, signified a definite measure of land. The term *yard*—still applied to the yard of a ship, meant any pole, and is now applied to a determinate lineal measure. *To starve*, which primarily meant to die any kind of death, has long since been limited to death by cold or hunger. We raise no contention, therefore, at present, as to the primary meaning of the word *baptiso*, in its native tongue: it is for its particular meaning that we contend, when it must be expounded by another language, and when applied to the sacred ordinances of a people whose religious ceremonies were symbolical, and amongst whom immersion, as now practised, was entirely unknown.

Nor should it be overlooked, that Christ did not speak the Greek language, nor of Grecian customs; but he spoke of ceremonies peculiar to his own religion. He used the Hebrew, or a mixed dialect in which the Syriac prevailed, and in which the commission to baptize was originally given. The Syriac word “*omed*,” which expresses the rite of baptism in the New Testament, is transferred from the Hebrew term “*omed*,” and signifies to erect or set up a pillar. Baptism, then, is the ordinance by which an individual is visibly *constituted* a member of the Church, or set apart to God for the defence and upholding of the truth, like the pillars in the ancient temple, like “James, Cephas, and John, who seemed to be pillars”* in the Christian Church, or like the redeemed who are “pillars in the temple of God.”† Pillars were formerly consecrated by an act of pouring, not by immersion.‡ Hence Paul is requested by Ananias, to “Arise and be baptized.”§

A lengthened disquisition on *bapto*, from which *baptiso* is derived, would be foreign to our purpose. Whatever was the original meaning of these words, both came, as frequently

* Gal. ii. 9. † Rev. iii. 12. ‡ Gen. xxvii. 18. § Acts, xxii. 16, ix. 18.

occurs in our own language, to have a variety of applications. The primary signification of *bapto*, may have been to dip, and then to dye by dipping; but Hippocrates says: "When it *drops* upon the garments, they are dyed;" and he thus proves that one of the earliest meanings of the word was to drop or sprinkle. Homer tells us, in hyperbolic and poetical language, that a lake was baptized or coloured with the blood of a frog. Some of our opponents say, that this father of poetry represents the lake as deeply tinged *as if* it had been immersed in blood. Those who can so explain the passage, and torture it to favour immersion, are, we fear, so deeply plunged into party spirit, that their condition is hopeless; for they entirely overlook the important fact, that the baptizing element was *poured* into that baptized. This destroys their system. Ælian informs us, that an old coxcomb "endeavoured to conceal the hoariness of his hair by dyeing it." The process here was not that of dipping, and is evidence that the original meaning of *bapto* was to dye by applying the colouring substance to the object, and not the object to the substance. Aristophanes says that Magnes the comedian baptized or *smear*ed his face with certain washes, instead of wearing a mask. Aristotle likewise tells us, that the hand is baptized, or stained, by pressing in it a colouring substance. Is there not in all this distinctly the opposite of *plunging*? Why, then, will men insist, in defiance of these plain facts, that *bapto* signifies only to *dip*, when its evident meaning is to dye or colour, which may be effected by either dipping, sprinkling, or squeezing?

In Dan. iv. 33, *bapto* signifies the act by which Nebuchadnezzar was wetted with the dew of heaven, proving incontestibly that the very root of *baptiso*, as understood by the Septuagint, signifies pouring or sprinkling, not immersion. Dr. Gale and others labour hard to show that the king was drenched "*as if*" he had been dipt. To whatever extent this

assumption may be correct, the dew fell upon the king, and he was not dipt into the dew ; the *mode* thus remains unaffected by their criticisms. Dr. Carson, p. 37, never content with half measures, rebukes his friend Dr. Gale for his exposition, and would render the word "*immerse*." To argue that a man is plunged *into* dew which drops down *upon* him, may evince the difficulties of a special pleader in substantiating his case, but it is too preposterous to require a formal refutation, and will be received at its proper value by most minds.

The term occurs only three times in the New Testament : in Luke, xvi. 24, where it refers to the dipping of the point of a finger ; in John, xiii. 26, it alludes to the dipping of the end of a piece of bread in the sauce ; and in Rev. xix. 13, it proves that the victorious warrior's garments were sprinkled with the blood of his enemies. Even when it means to dip, it leaves us entirely uninformed respecting how much of the body should be dipt ; but it gives certain information that the whole object was seldom plunged, and that sprinkling was one of its earliest meanings. So various are its uses, that it can mean, without specifying the *mode*, only to wet or stain, in any way required by the nature of the thing to be wetted or coloured. Besides, it is never applied to the ordinance of baptism, and can therefore give us no information concerning the mode of its administration.

This diversity should teach men, who dogmatically transfer to the Scriptures *one* of its primary senses, some caution in deciding the question at issue ; for, to affirm that it has only one application, is simply *not correct* ; and to argue from it as if it had only that one meaning, is a flagrant violation of sound reasoning. When *bapto* and any of its derivatives are applied to the customs of the Bible, they cannot give a new meaning to these customs, though they themselves may acquire a new application ; and whatever was their primary

signification, they must be understood, when employed as translations of the Bible, in a Scriptural sense. We make no change upon the meanings of these words ; we merely take one of their acknowledged acceptations, and expound it by the Scriptures. Here, we can take no assertion unsupported by proof, nor can we allow any conjecture to take the place of the word of God. The main point to settle, therefore, is not, what was the original meaning of these terms among the Greeks, but, amidst the numerous ideas which they have gradually acquired, what meaning do they receive from the Bible ?

Dr. Carson says, p. 55, of *baptizo* : " IT ALWAYS SIGNIFIES TO DIP ; NEVER EXPRESSING ANY THING BUT MODE." A few examples, not from lexicographers, for whose critical exactness he entertains little respect, will prove the contrary of this. It may signify either to plunge the whole body under water, or to pour water upon the body. 1. To immerse.—When Eupolis was thrown into the sea, he was *baptized*. " This baptism," says the Doctor, " surely was immersion." Granted : and poor Eupolis was drowned, not dipt, by that baptism. 2. To overflow.—When Josephus narrates the flight, by sea, of the people driven out of Joppa by the Romans, he says of the ships : " The wave high raised, baptized them." He does not say that the wave was the baptizer immersing them in the sea, but the wave itself baptized them. Here the vessels were overwhelmed by the wave, not immersed in it. Aristotle informs us that the Phœnicians, while sailing without the Pillars of Hercules, " came to some desert places abounding with rushes and sea-weed, which on the ebb are not baptized, but in the flood are deluged." The land thus covered by the flowing of the tide, was baptized. This can neither be *to dip*, nor *to cause to dip* ; for the land was overflowed by the sea, not plunged into it.

In the above examples, then, taken from two early Greek

writers and a Jew, we have *two* distinct modes, which are as essentially different, as plunging a man into a bath filled with water, and putting him into an empty bath, and *pouring* water upon him. Dr. Carson himself says, p. 90,—“A WORD THAT APPLIES TO TWO MODES CAN DESIGNATE NEITHER.” We are at full liberty, therefore, to explain the word, which may refer to either mode, in the way that the word employed to designate the Christian rite demands. Our examples are selected from authors produced by our opponents, and not one of their examples refers to the ordinance of baptism, nor to any religious ceremony among even the heathen. Our present object is merely to prove that *baptiso*, as employed by the Greeks themselves, does *not* always signify to dip; and this simple proof completely destroys the main argument of immersionists. We shall afterwards prove, that when it is applied to the Christian rite of baptism, it signifies *pouring*, not immersion, and thus carries along with it a shade of one of its primary meanings, and does not assume an entirely new acceptation. Our mode of baptism does not depend upon the meaning of the word as sometimes used by the Greeks, but upon the Divine testimony, ascertained by the meaning of the words which the Spirit employs.

In the New Testament, *baptiso* and its derivatives have various applications. 1st. Purifying in general. Mark, vii. 4, 8.—“And when they come from the market, except they wash, (*baptise*,) they eat not. And many other things there be which they have received to hold, as the washing (baptisms) of cups, and pots, brazen vessels, and of tables (couches.) For, laying aside the commandment of God, ye hold the tradition of men, as the washing (baptisms) of pots and cups; and many other such like things ye do.” Thus they rejected “the commandment of God:” and whatever the word baptism, here translated “washing,” may signify, our Saviour condemns the practice, and declares it is a tradition of man

which has supplanted that commandment. Granting, for a moment, that immersion is found here, the principal question is not, What would a person privately do with his household furniture? but, What would a public minister do in publicly consecrating an individual by a religious rite? The question is, How would the Apostles act, guided by the Spirit of Christ whose example they followed? and not, What would superstitious Jews do? How to cleanse their furniture when legally defiled, is stated in Num. xix. 18,—“And a clean person shall take hyssop, and dip it in the water, and sprinkle it upon the tent, and upon all the vessels, and upon the persons that were there, and upon him that touched a bone, or one slain, or one dead, or a grave.” Here sprinkling, and neither immersion nor washing, is enjoined. Like some others, these erring Jews imagined that they had *something more to do*, and it is for superstitiously doing more than the law required, that they are *condemned*. Pots and cups might be immersed; but to plunge their couches upon every trivial occasion would have kept them continually without a bed to lie upon. Dr. Carson attempts to obviate this serious difficulty by *supposing* it was the *frame* of the bed that was plunged; and to make the operation still more convenient, he *assumes* that the frame was so constructed that it could be easily taken to pieces and put together again!* Were we entirely ignorant of Eastern household furniture, these conjectures, on which he reasons as if they were admitted facts, might pass for wonderful sagacity. By every intelligent person, his hypotheses must be reprobated as fancies which can amuse and deceive children alone. In Palestine, the mass of the people sleep upon the floor, on light mattresses which they can roll up and cast aside at pleasure; on which they commonly sit during the day; and the Doctor's fiction, invented to give a party exposition to the Bible, and to support a frail

* Baptism, 400.

system, cannot be too severely condemned. He also forgets that, though ponds were always at hand, the immersion of these unclean couches would have defiled the whole water, and rendered it unfit for both common and religious purposes.

In Heb. ix. 10, we likewise read,—“Which stood only in meats and drinks, and divers washings (baptisms,) and carnal ordinances, imposed on them until the time of reformation.” Our opponents assume that washing cannot be effected without immersion. But the word *baptisms* here, or *washings*, must refer, principally at least, to the ceremonial sprinklings of the law, both with water and blood. There is undoubtedly a reference to the ablutions of the Jews, which were merely the public washings of the hands and the feet of the priests; or if there was a cleansing of the whole body, it was done by the individual in private. Immersion, therefore, of one person by another in public, is not in the verse, because it was not in the law.

2d. So much of the Gospel as John the Baptist taught when he baptized his disciples. Acts xviii. 25,—Agabus knew “only the baptism of John:” some would say the plunging of John, as if the passage spake exclusively of the mode of baptism. The apostle alludes to that into which he was baptized, and not to the particular mode of dispensing the ordinance. Agabus, like many others, had been plunged into neither Moses nor Christ, as if these were liquids, but had been baptized into the belief of a coming Messiah—one mightier than John. This ceremony, of setting apart and initiating an individual, had been performed by sprinkling or pouring according to divine prescription. The verse gives no countenance to the doctrine of immersion.

3d. The outward ordinance of baptism, in which the application of water represents the cleansing of the soul from sin by the blood of Christ, which is called “the blood of sprinkling.” I. Peter iii. 21.—“The like figure whereunto

even baptism doth also now save us, (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ." There is not the slightest allusion in the text to the mode of baptism, and if there is a reference in the context, it is simply to our salvation, symbolized in baptism, by the death of Jesus, into whose blood we are never plunged. We are purified and redeemed, being sprinkled with his blood ; not that there is an actual sprinkling, but as persons were formerly sanctified and made acceptable worshippers by the sprinkling of blood, so, by the pouring or sprinkling of water in baptism, which is symbolical of the purifying and sanctifying influences of Christ's blood, we are accepted in God's sight. Noah was saved by water, not plunged into it. He was saved from an ungodly generation and from an untimely end ; and we are saved from wickedness, spiritual pollution, and the second death, by the sufferings of Christ. Immersion is nowhere in the passage.

4th. The sufferings of Christ, by which he was consecrated and prepared for his entrance upon his kingly office. Luke, xii. 50.—" I have a baptism to be baptized with." To translate these words, " I have a plunging to be plunged with," must strike every ear as being harsh and unnatural, as well as being contrary to fact. Neither at his entrance upon his priestly office, nor upon his kingly functions, was Jesus immersed, however much his soul might be troubled on the latter occasion. He commenced his public ministrations by the initiatory rite of *pouring* ; and his sorrows now *came upon* his soul.

5th. Inward spiritual cleansing, by which the gifts and graces of the Spirit, signified by the external sign of baptism, are really and actually bestowed. Mat. iii. 11.—" He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire." As fire is pure in itself, and refines whatever is subjected to its influ-

ence, so the Holy Ghost is pure and purifies the soul from sin. But baptizing with that Divine agent must mean, respecting mode, only sprinkling or pouring. The passage is the prophecy recorded by John, that the Messiah would baptize his disciples with the Holy Ghost; and at Acts, xi. 15, 16, Peter recognises its accomplishment in his falling upon the converted Gentiles, or, as it is expressed in Acts, x. 45, his being poured out upon them. In these quotations, baptism is a figure of regeneration or sanctification, and pouring must be the mode of applying the sign.

This internal purification is also symbolized by the external application of water. John, iii. 5.—“Except a man be born of the water, and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.” Dr. Carson, p. 476, remarks on this verse: “*To be born of water* most evidently implies that water is the womb out of which the person who is born proceeds.” We do not say that the man who thus speaks is wilfully a dangerous expounder of Scripture, nor that he is ripe for a cardinal’s hat; but we are thankful that he is not the dictator of *our* faith. The passage simply means that, as water cleanses from filthiness, so the Spirit washes the soul from spiritual defilement. The change thereby produced is so complete—embracing the whole man—that it is called a new birth, and is so indispensable that, without it, no man can enter heaven.

There are only two cases where *baptiso* is used in the Greek translation of the Old Testament. Isa. xxi. 4.—“Iniquity baptizes me:” that is, overwhelms or confounds me. It did so, by coming upon him, not by his being immersed in it. The two modes are essentially distinct. The Hebrew is properly rendered in our version: “Fearfulness affrighted me.” The Septuagint, therefore, is merely a human comment, and is no infallible guide to what the Scriptures mean. If *baptiso*, however, be a correct translation of the Hebrew

word *affright*, it is only a figurative application of the term, and can afford no certain information respecting the mode of administering a gospel ordinance.

The other instance is II. Kings, v. 14, where Naaman is said to have gone "down and baptized himself seven times in the Jordan." Here, washing in a river is called baptism, and our opponents have vainly endeavoured to convert the incident into a powerful auxiliary. They are bound to prove more than the meaning of the term in its native language: we require evidence that it is an exact corresponding word to the Hebrew. The meaning of what was done is to be determined solely on the authority of the original language, of which the Greek term is a translation, for the latter, when applied to the same action, can mean nothing more than the original. The proud captain was commanded to wash, not to immerse; and it is not in the word that he did more than was enjoined. He was in no mood to go beyond the law prescribed by the prophet; we are not warranted to suppose that he did; and if he immersed instead of washing himself, he made an addition to the words of the Spirit. The exact shade of meaning, therefore, of *baptizo* in the present case, must be known from connection and appropriation, not from the word itself. It is from the Bible, not from views of independent probability, founded upon a foreign language, that we must derive our knowledge of the fact. A man may be said, in loose phraseology, to wash, when he bathes or dips himself; but in critical exactness, the act of washing is distinct from that of dipping or immersing. A man standing at the edge of a vessel, fountain, or river, may wash his entire body and never have his foot in the water: he must be in the water to either dip or immerse his body at one act. Naaman was simply commanded to *wash*, which does *not* imply immersion; and if he was directed to the Jordan, not to the rivers of Damascus, neither would he be permitted to add anything

to the act of cleansing. Two words of different languages are thus employed to express the same thing, and the Hebrew must rule the meaning of both ; but two words which apply to the same ordinance, must be identical in that shade of their meaning. Immersion, therefore, is not in the passage ; and though it were, no public minister having performed the act, and Naaman having washed himself, the word can form no rule for a public and gospel ordinance performed by one man to another.

Such is a specimen from the Bible of its various applications. These prove distinctly that *baptizo* can teach us nothing definite respecting the mode of baptism ; and to obtain more certain information, we must apply to other sources. We therefore observe,

1st. The word is sometimes used in the Scriptures when it was morally impossible that it could mean immersion. Mark, i. 4.—“John did baptize in the wilderness.” This was a most improbable place in which to find sufficient water for plunging. It is true that immersionists can find tents, changes of raiment, rivers, fountains, baths, &c., everywhere,—that is, their imagination supplies whatever is necessary for their purpose. It is also true that Dr. Carson says : “The possibility of this is enough for me.”* This is his favourite and convenient method of getting quit of many troublesome difficulties ; and such bold statements, being often mistaken for strong arguments, will produce their intended effect upon certain minds. It was undoubtedly as possible for God to dig a baptistery and fill it in the desert, as to bring a stream from the rock at Sinai ; it was as possible for Gabriel and his fellow-angels to bring the needed water, as for the ravens to supply the wants of Elijah ; it was as possible for God to give the baptized individuals a change of raiment, as to preserve entire the clothing and shoes of the

* Baptism, 67.

Israelites for forty years in the wilderness. With God, all these things, and many more, were possible; but where is the record of them? where is their probability? or even, without miraculous agency, their *possibility*? When John, therefore, baptized so many in a desert where it is known that water sufficient for immersion never existed, to tell us, "only let it be possible," and then to reason as if it were a reality, is to trifle with the historical facts of Scripture.

The ordinance of baptism is always described as being symbolical of moral purification. In the Scriptures that end is uniformly gained by sprinkling an object, and pouring on persons set apart as priests and kings.* Aaron and his sons, Saul and David, received this ceremonial inauguration into office. In allusion to this custom, and when God promised to consecrate unto himself the whole people, he said, Ezek. xxxvi. 25,—“Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean:” it is predicted of Christ, Isaiah, lii. 15,—“So shall he sprinkle many nations;” and Paul, employing a similar phraseology for a like purpose, writes, Heb. xii. 24, that believers are come “to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and *to the blood of sprinkling*, that speaketh better things than that of Abel.” Baptism, then, was the setting apart of individuals to their new vocation; was initiating them into the outward privileges of the Christian faith; was dedicating them as “kings and priests unto God;” and was symbolical, by the cleansing nature of the water employed and by its mode of application, of the regenerating operations of the Holy Spirit. The completeness of all such consecration rites did not depend upon the quantity of the dedicating element, whether that element was blood, oil, or water, but upon its appropriateness for its spiritual purposes and its mode of application; so that, when the people were merely sprinkled, young and old were re-

* Lev. viii. 11, 12.

garded as legally devoted to the Lord ; when the head only was anointed, the entire person was deemed consecrated ; and when the hands and feet alone were washed, the whole body was regarded ceremonially clean.* The blood was that of a sacrifice, perfect after its kind and offered to God : the oil was compounded of ingredients divinely prescribed ; and the water required to be pure,—living or running. This last provision—either forgotten or not known by our opponents—was essential. If an individual—as we personally learned from both Samaritans and Jews in Palestine—was religiously or symbolically purified in a bath, the water, however large the quantity, being supposed to be polluted, both for common and sacred uses, required to be emptied, and the bath refilled before a second person would enter it. In the wilderness, therefore, where John baptized, and over the greater part of which we recently travelled, there is not the slightest indication of water sufficient for immersion purposes. There are a few springs whence water could be obtained for performing the rite, on large numbers, by pouring, the only mode of observing such a ceremony known and practised amongst the Jews ; but immersion was, humanly speaking, an impossibility.

2d. The word does not uniformly signify a total immersion, our opponents themselves being judges. When hard pressed, they confess that they “ never pretend to prove the extent of the immersion from the word itself.”† From this important concession, by such an authority, an honest-minded person might conclude that immersionists had abandoned the controversy as hopeless. But, “ though vanquished, they can argue still,” and strenuously maintain, on the very next page of the same work, that “ No evidence is essentially necessary, but that of the word itself.” The word is nothing, and it is every thing ! How can we deal with men so unstable in their principles ?

* John, xiii. 10. † Baptism, 403.

Numb. xix. 17.—“They shall take of the ashes of the burnt heifer of purification for sin, and running water shall be put thereto in a vessel.” The more literal translation of the Hebrew is: “and living water shall be given above them in a vessel.” Here the Divine precept is explicitly to *pour*. The Septuagint also has it: “and pour upon them living water in a vessel.” But Josephus, referring to this law, employs *baptiso* in regard to the wetting of the ashes; and our opponents affirm that, according to Josephus, the ashes were immersed in the water, and not the water poured upon them. They are driven to this strange assumption, to defend their theory that *baptiso* signifies only to immerse. Now, the Jewish historian either did not know the law, or he has misrepresented it, for pouring and immersion are essentially distinct acts; but he did know the law—being remarkably tenacious of its very letter—and he has not misrepresented it: he therefore uses *baptiso* in the sense of *pour*, and not of *immerse*. Whatever be its application in other locations, this is evidently its meaning here; and we prefer the unvarnished truth of Scripture, to the most elaborate disquisition on Greek derivatives, or to any suspicion that Josephus was ignorant of his subject.

When Alexander marched his army along a narrow passage at the foot of Mount Climax in Lycia, the sea having covered the path, we are informed by Strabo, that “the troops were in the water a whole day, being *baptized* up to the middle.” Must any one be told that there is here nothing like an immersion? Polybius applies the word to soldiers “baptized up to the breasts” in water. Porphyry says that certain persons were, in crossing the famous river Styx, “baptized up to the head.” No one can demand clearer examples than these that the word does not uniformly mean a total immersion; and they are instances in which the most unlearned may judge for himself in the matter.

What the term means, therefore, in any given condition, we must learn from the words in connection, from the nature of the subject, and not exclusively from the word itself. It is admitted: "Now the extent of the immersion has nothing to do with the meaning of the word."* Then why such laborious efforts, on the success of which their cause entirely depends, to prove that it signifies immersion, and nothing else? If in any one case it has not the meaning of a complete plunging, then the extent of the immersion must be gathered from circumstances. The nature and extent of the ordinance of baptism, therefore, must determine the extent of the meaning of the word; and if there be one case—and we have produced several as a specimen—in which it does not signify a complete immersion, then a complete immersion cannot be a part of the meaning of the word.

3d. When it does signify immersion, there is generally connected with it the idea of injury, or destruction, to the object immersed. We readily admit that the word does sometimes mean a complete submerging, and our opponents then boast that we have conceded all; they forget, in their haste, their own concessions, and the insurmountable difficulty which ours involves. Is destruction or injury necessarily implied in the word? No. But such is almost invariably the consequence when it signifies a total immersion. For example: The partial immersion of Alexander's troops is recorded because it was annoying and injurious. Polybius tells us, that "the oak is baptized (sunk) by its own weight." Josephus says, that "when the vessel was about to be baptized" (sunk.) He also informs us, that Herod's servants effected the death of his son Aristobulus, at Tiberias, by baptizing him—that is, by drowning him. Diodorus Siculus, speaking of a flood, says: "Many of the land animals, *baptized* in the river, perished." Few would desire such an immersion. Timon the man-

* Baptism, 263.

hater boasts, in Lucian: "If in winter, the river should carry away any one with the stream, and the person with outstretched hands should beg to be taken out, that he would drive him from the bank, and *baptize* him headlong, so that he would not be able again to lift his head above water." This *is* a complete baptism by immersion. It is a model which few will copy; yet Dr. Carson says: "Having such examples before my eyes, I cannot resist God, to please men."* We are not yet persuaded by his sophistry and declamation that refusing to consign wood and vessels to the bottom of the ocean, to destroy cattle, or to drown our fellow creatures, is to resist the will of God; and we shall continue to decline following "such examples" of baptismal immersion.

When we are asked, therefore, Does the word never mean submersion? our answer is, Yes; the word tells us that the above objects were put under the water, but it does not say that they came up again. The sunken wood, the foundered vessel, the perished cattle, and the drowned men, remained at the bottom of the water. The word *baptiso*, therefore, expresses only one half of their act of baptism, and another is needed to express the other half.

The same idea is, in our daily conversation, connected with the term *immerse*, which is employed by our opponents as synonymous with *baptiso*. We speak of a man's being immersed in the world, or worldly affairs, to the exclusion of other and better concerns; in intemperance, debauchery, &c.; but never in holiness, or benevolent deeds. This phraseology is of ancient date; for Lactantius also employs the words, "*vitiis immersi*"—immersed in vice; and Origen uses the same figure in his commentary on John. No quibbling, no abuse of opponents, can free the immersion system from this serious objection.

* Baptiam, 58.

4th. For two reasons, a Jew could not understand the word to mean immersion. 1st. It is never employed, even by the Greeks, to designate a public religious act, performed by one person to another, because they had no such ceremony. If, at any time, as in the case of Ulysses,* an individual required, for comfort or refreshment, to bathe, wash, or immerse himself, some friend might conduct him to a proper and secluded place, but every spectator retired whilst he performed his own immersion or ablution. The very heathen had thus more respect to decency and their own dignity,—not to speak of their reverence for divine worship,—than to submit to, or tolerate, such an act in public. Other abominations they might have in abundance; but of this one they were not guilty; and it is a flagrant abuse of propriety to thrust now upon Jews, or professing Christians, a practice which had no existence amongst the less favoured Greeks, and which was reserved for other and more superstitious times. 2d. In none of the numerous and burdensome rites of the Mosaic economy, of which the Hebrews were so tenacious, was there anything resembling a public immersion of one man by another. When our proof of this is demanded, we merely respond, Take the whole Bible as our evidence, and produce, if possible, one passage to the contrary. The leper was indeed commanded to wash his body; but it was for himself, and by himself.† Moses was enjoined to wash Aaron and his sons, as a symbolical purification from uncleanness, as initiatory into a higher and purer state, and as setting them apart for the priesthood. He was required merely to wash, and not to immerse these priests.‡ In Lev. viii. 6, we are told that he complied with these instructions. Our opponents affirm that Moses immersed Aaron and his sons; the *Bible* does not say that he did. Every one knows that a man may be washed at a fountain or river, whilst even

* Od. vi. 216. † Lev. xiv. 8, 9. ‡ Ex. xxix. 4. xl. 12.

his foot may never be in the water ; and, except by controversialists, who, to support an unsound theory, are compelled to confound things separate, the words wash and immerse are always understood as perfectly distinct in meaning. The Hebrew term, "rahatz," translated *wash*, in reference to Aaron, may apply to the whole body ; but when the leper's clothes were to be washed, which usually implies immersion, another term, "kabas," is employed. In Ex. xxx. 20, Aaron and his sons are commanded to wash with water, though to what extent is not specified ; but in verses 19 and 21 we are plainly told that "*their hands and their feet*" were alone to be washed. This is an explicit limitation, and to extend this washing to a complete immersion of the body is to tamper with the Scriptures. It is true that the Greek version of the Old Testament gives one word for the washing of the body and another for the washing of the hands and feet ; but this is merely a human comment on the Bible, and is not to be received as divine inspiration. In three of the verses quoted above there is no limitation to the act of washing, but neither is there an extension of it ; in two of them the limitation is distinctly stated, though the same Hebrew word, rendered *wash*, is used in *all* the verses. It was "*their hands and their feet*," therefore, that were to be washed, and this, in all probability, was then done by pouring, as it is now in the East, without immersing either hand or foot. The water was applied to the body, and not the body to the water.

Our opponents do violence to the Scriptures, by making the washings of the law to be immersions, which are totally distinct acts ; nor does the one word imply the other. How is the meaning of the term to be ascertained, except by the act which it designates ? What was the extent of these public ceremonial washings, we are plainly told in Ex. xxx. 19, 21. Feet and hands were thus to be publicly washed, though the law does not specify the exact mode, and we must therefore

appeal to the practice of the people. They are still washed in the East by pouring water on them, not by plunging them into it. We repeatedly witnessed the operation in Palestine. Let one case suffice. At Khaiffa, a servant, at the door of a house, was pouring water from an earthen pitcher on the hands of an aged Jew, who caught the water as it fell. He had thus running water for his ablution, whilst the portion polluted by the washing of his hands was lost on the ground. We had here a pleasing illustration of a very ancient custom: "But Jehoshaphat said, Is there not here a prophet of the Lord, that we may enquire of the Lord at him? And one of the King of Israel's servants answered and said, There is Elisha the son of Shaphat, which poured water on the hands of Elijah."* This is still their prevailing custom.

Feet were washed after the same manner out of doors; and when done in the house, a basin caught the fouled water, which was afterwards thrown away. In the wilderness the priests washed at a small vessel that was easily carried throughout their journeyings, and in which immersion could not be performed. The molten sea before the temple was for their special benefit. Its height, nine feet, precluded their reaching it for immersion; whilst the entrance of one would have polluted the whole of its contents for another. It contained 6426 gallons. To empty and refill it, as frequently as necessary for immersion, would have been a tedious and difficult process, occupying more than the whole time of the temple service. But the Bible distinctly states that it was for the priests to wash "*thereat*."† Our Saviour, too, washed the disciples' feet according to ancient custom. He says, concerning his own, in Luke vii. 44.—"Thou gavest me no water *upon* my feet." This is the proper translation of the passage. The water was thus brought to the person, and not the person to the water; and pouring, *not* immersion, is the Bible practice.

* II. Kings, iii. 11.

† Ex. xxx. 19.

5th. The language employed in Scripture to express the mode in which the Spirit comes in contact with the souls of men, is distinctly against the idea of immersion. It is the emblematical use of the word *baptizo* that must determine its meaning as applied to a Bible institution ; and if the thing signified be pouring, then pouring must be the meaning of that term in its new application. The obligation is not to immerse because the word *baptizo*, in its native language, sometimes signifies to envelope ; but it signifies a consecration, by pouring, of the individual to God. This was the only emblematical mode of the rite with which the Jews were acquainted. It does not depend upon the meaning of the word in its native tongue ; it rests upon the inspired explanation of the ordinance, as given by Peter in Acts, xi. 16, where nothing can be more clearly taught, than that the mode is emblematical of the Spirit's descent. The Spirit was to be poured down ; the only mode for setting individuals apart for religious purposes, as " kings and priests unto God," was by anointing, which was effected by pouring ; the apostles connect the effusion of the Spirit with baptism, and thus apply the word, in one shade of one of its proper and original meanings, to this new ordinance. That mode is not a matter of indifference ; for if the mode be employed for an emblematical purpose, that mode is as essential as the water itself to the Scriptural performing of the ordinance. Dr. Carson concedes : " When water is the emblem, his descent is spoken of as pouring, or as falling like dew, &c."* This admission, so fatal to immersion, so Scriptural and corroborative of our faith, should settle the question ; yet the same writer, page 105, denounces the idea of the Spirit's descent as a " blasphemous error !" Such are some of the inconsistencies in our irascible opponent. We are, however, at liberty to change neither the mode nor element of baptism,

* Baptism, 112.

even though we arrogate, like the Pope, the power of creating both emblems and ordinances.

That baptism symbolizes the agency of the Holy Ghost, in sanctifying us from the filthiness of the flesh, we have already proved by an appeal to the language of Peter. How he descends, and why he is spoken of as descending, are not revealed ; the undoubted facts are sufficient for our faith. If a figure, therefore, is the adaptation of a natural object or action to a spiritual subject, the mode of applying the figurative action must resemble the mode in which that spiritual subject operates. Now, the Spirit is never spoken of as coming from beneath, nor being an inactive substance into which the baptized is plunged, but is uniformly represented as descending upon the soul. In this way did he come upon Jesus at *his* baptism. God promised to pour out his Spirit upon all flesh. The Holy Ghost came down upon the apostles, upon the sons and daughters of Abraham, on the day of Pentecost. He subsequently fell upon the Gentiles, as upon the Jews "at the beginning." If the Bible, therefore, and not human conjecture, is to be our guide ; if the cleansing nature of water symbolizes the purifying agency of the Spirit ; if the mode of applying the symbol should represent, as closely as possible, the mode in which the thing signified is applied ; then *pouring*, and not *immersion* which subverts the doctrine of salvation by grace and is contrary to the word of God, is, as clearly as symbol and plain language can make the subject, the proper and scriptural mode of baptism. On this and every other doctrine of vital Christianity, may we have wisdom to understand, grace to receive, and power to reduce to practice, the whole counsel of God.

B A P T I S M.

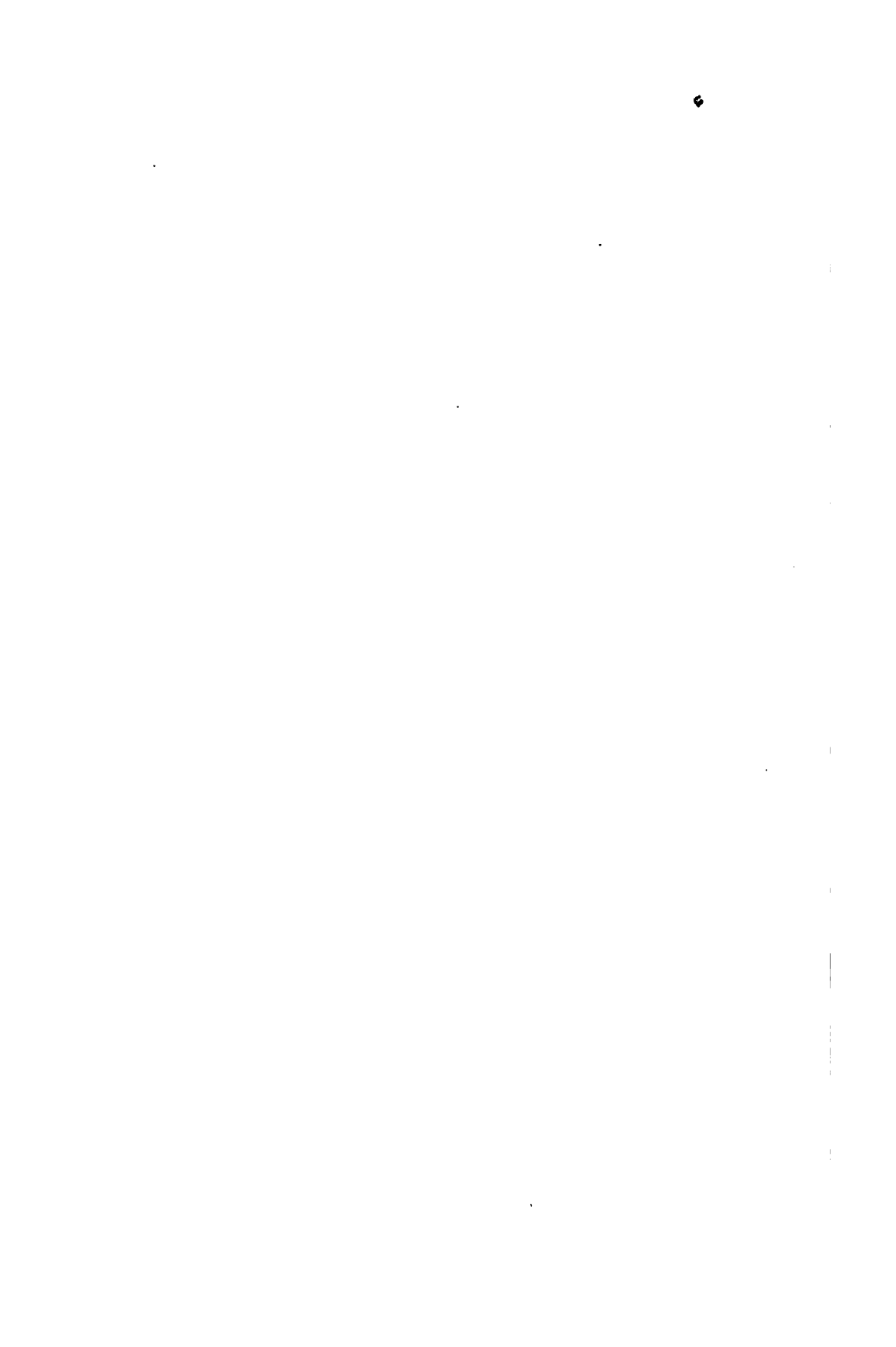
F I F T H L E C T U R E ;

BY

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B A P T I S M.

"Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life."—Rom. vi. 4.

A SUBJECT, not difficult in itself, has been rendered complicated by the voluminous productions of disputants. Hence the question is sometimes asked, either in sincerity or to bewilder feeble minds, Since learned and honest men differ so widely on baptism, how shall those, not conversant with the original languages, judge for themselves? By a very simple process, and as we determine all other religious matters: "To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them." The entire Bible, and not detached portions of it, after the Old and New Testaments have been ruthlessly separated and mangled, must decide every such controversy. There is surely nothing in this to prevent the humblest from forming a satisfactory and safe conclusion. Our opponents appeal to heathen writers and practices to judge of what the Bible means. Let the Scriptures be their own interpreter; and

much, if not the whole of the mystery, in which the subject is supposed to be involved, will speedily disappear.

To vindicate the practice of immersion, several passages and incidents of Scripture are adduced. Every thing is done by immersionists that human ingenuity and learning can accomplish, to support their cause. Of this no one has a right to complain; but we claim the liberty of examining the results of their labours. They produce,

1st. Acts, ii. 2-4.—“And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues, like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.” One writer says: “That which is immersed in a liquid is completely subjected to its influence, and imbued with its virtues; so *to be immersed in the Spirit*, represents the subjection of soul, body, and spirit to its influence.”* This assumed plunging, which is neither uniformly in the word *baptizo*, nor in the thing into which we are baptized, is the foundation of their heresy. Our antagonists tell us, that the Holy Ghost here filled the house, thereby immersing the apostles, who were said to be baptized with the Spirit, and consequently immersion is the proper mode of baptism. But to be filled with, is not to be immersed in, the Spirit: he now came upon the disciples, who, consequently, could not be plunged into him; and when we are baptized by that holy agent, there is no more an actual immersion in him, than there is an actual sacrifice in eating the Lord’s Supper. They are perplexed to know whether it was the wind, or the Spirit, that filled the house. Of this they are certain, that the house was filled, and the apostles were immersed in what filled it. The above author adds: “The wind *descended to*

* Baptism, 104.

fill the house, that when the house was filled with the wind the disciples might be baptized in it."* Who told him so? Not the Bible. He plunges the apostles into wind, water, or the Holy Spirit, as confidently as if he had been the Spirit's counsellor: but to draw such conclusions from the passage, requires a powerful and misguided imagination. To all their conjectures we reply, 1. It was the sound, not the Holy Ghost, that filled the house. 2. It is not said that even the wind filled the apartment, for the noise merely *resembled* that "of a rushing mighty wind." 3. The Holy Ghost, assuming the visible form of cloven tongues, "like as of fire," merely "sat upon each of them," and did not surround them as if even to envelope them. Neither the sound, nor the wind—if there was any—was the Holy Ghost, for it only announced his approach, and prepared the disciples for some great and singular event. 4. They were filled with the Holy Ghost, not immersed in him; and surely a vessel may be filled in various ways, and with many substances, without being plunged into that which fills it. They were imbued with this Divine agent: by the abundance of his gifts and influences, he sanctified and strengthened their every power of body and faculty of soul, bestowing on them the power of working miracles. His agency was necessary; he was fully and freely bestowed: but to prove from this verse baptism by immersion in water, which has no countenance from the passage, is to force upon the Bible a doctrine which it does not contain.

2d. Christ's sufferings. Luke, xii. 50.—"But I have a baptism to be baptized with; and how am I straitened till it be accomplished!" We are told that the sufferings of Jesus were his baptism; that they overwhelmed or overflowed his soul; and that baptism, therefore, must signify immersion. Dr. Carson, p. 310, acknowledges that *baptiso* is figurative "with respect to the baptism of the Spirit, and with respect

* Baptism, 110.

to the sufferings of our Lord." But others of his party are more consistent with themselves, and more fully carry out their principles of actual plunging. In support of their statement, that Christ was plunged into his woes, Psa. lxix. 1, 2, 14, is adduced:—"Save me, O God, for the waters are come in unto my soul. I sink in deep mire, where there is no standing. I am come into deep waters, where the floods overflow me." It is unfortunate for our opponents, that this quotation is opposed to their views; it proves that the waters, which symbolize his sorrows, overflow Christ, and do *not* prove that he was immersed in these floods. Granting, for a moment, that the word baptism is here synonymous with immersion, we have decisive evidence—our antagonists themselves being judges—that if it signifies immersion, it also implies injury or destruction to the object immersed. But nowhere in the Bible is suffering ever made a symbol of any gospel ordinance. We are, indeed, required to be crucified unto the world; but the world must also be crucified unto us: the meaning of which is, that we must hate sin and flee from its very appearance, and be as little under its influence as if we were dead to it, but neither is crucifixion, nor suffering of any kind, ever made to represent a spiritual privilege. What then does our Saviour mean by his painful baptism? Simply, that as the high priest was first purified by water, and the pouring of oil on his head, and he afterwards sprinkled the blood of atonement on the mercy-seat, so Jesus, having been also set apart to his public duties, by water and the anointing of the Holy Spirit, was, by sprinkling his own blood on the mercy-seat of the gospel, now about to perform this other part of his priestly office. It was his conflict with the powers of darkness, his bearing a world's guilt which God *laid upon* him, and which he voluntarily bore, that pressed upon his spirit. We have here, therefore, the greatness of Christ's struggles and sufferings in accomplishing the last act of his

priestly office upon earth ; but either immersion into his sorrows, or baptism by plunging—as a religious ceremony enjoined upon his followers—is not in the passage.

3d. Baptism at Ænon. John iii. 23.—“ And John also was baptizing in Ænon, near to Salim, because there was much water there ; and they came, and were baptized.” Immersionists eagerly conclude that John could repair to these waters for no other purpose than for immersion. “The reason alleged,” says Dr. Carson, “ John iii. 23, for baptizing in a particular place, implies that baptism is immersion. Instead of being difficult of being discovered here, I venture to say that there is scarcely any mind that has not some difficulty in keeping itself from seeing it.”* This worthy author could venture upon many things, and upon none more readily than upon depreciating and abusing his opponents. He asserts that immersion alone could bring these persons to such places for baptism. This is a pure conjecture, having no foundation in Scripture, and is mistaken for argument. It is amazing how acute men will sometimes find proof and precepts where none exist ; convert examples, which are common to both parties, into evidence for one side of the question ; and torture a passage to support their cause. If these waters were so abundant, where are they now ? They are not to be found, nor any vestige of their former existence. The pools of Solomon, with those at Tyre, and their aqueducts, still remain, though sadly dilapidated ; the pools and wells around Jerusalem can be easily found ; the fountain of Elisha, in the same plain of the Jordan with Ænon, is visible to all ; but Ænon baffles every research. Josephus mentions every notable fountain, stream, and river, and even some insignificant ones, in Palestine ; but Ænon is unworthy of a single word from the minute historian ! Would it have ceased to exist, or been thus passed over in silence, had it been of such magnitude as im-

* Baptism, 141.

mersionists would wish us to believe? Besides, wherever the exact spot was, it must have been near the Jordan; and there was no necessity for repairing to Ænon for a sufficient supply of water. We ask too, Where were the opportunities for the multitudes baptized by John for undressing, and dressing again? Where were their changes of raiment? Common decency forbids the idea of a mixed multitude of men and women being so baptized naked, and common prudence stands equally opposed to their being plunged in their usual dress. True, we are told that they *might* have tents and spare clothes with them; or, supposing that they had not, their own clothing, in an Eastern climate, would speedily dry upon their persons. This is not interpretation: it is romance. In short, to escape a difficulty, the unadorned narrative of Scripture is converted into a fairy scene which exists only in human fancy.

The simple facts are these. 1. Ænon signifies fountains or springs; "much water" means several streams from these fountains. 2. It must have always been a place of little notoriety, else it would have been mentioned by Josephus. 3. It must have been inconsiderable, for nothing can now be found corresponding to the descriptions given of it by our opponents, except a very moderately sized spring in a cave! 4. What is deemed much water in that country, would in this be thought of small importance. 5. In every religious rite, the purity of the water employed was of prime consideration, and an essential element in the proper administration of the ordinance. Hence pure, running, or living water is so frequently mentioned in connection with the sacrifices and ceremonies of purification. This fact completely destroys our opponents' hypothesis, that John repaired to rivers and fountains for the purposes of immersion. Dr. Carson, feeling that one of the strongest pillars of their system is thus overturned, indignantly asks: "Are gross superstitions to be a model for

Christ's ordinance?"* and then, in a similar strain, favours us with a long disquisition entirely irrelevant. It is very lamentable when a professing Christian so coolly denounces, as being superstitious, the express commands of Scripture. The Bible explicitly provided that the water, used in the religious ceremonies of the Jews, should be pure ; and the same idea is carried into the Christian economy. God and his religion are still holy ; the object of gospel institutions is still purity of heart and life ; and that holiness is still symbolized by the water in baptism. For the leper, one of the birds was to be killed " over running water,"† and his house was to be sprinkled with " running water."‡ The man that had an issue was to " bathe his flesh in running water."§ The person that was, by whatever means, ceremonially unclean, was to be purified with " running water."¶ When these parties were thus legally purified, they entered upon the performance of their other religious duties.

The prophets also speak of pure water as symbolizing both God and his word. " For my people have committed two evils: they have forsaken me, the fountain of living waters, and hewn them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water."|| " And it shall be in that day, that living waters shall go out from Jerusalem ; half of them toward the former sea, and half of them toward the hinder sea : in summer and in winter shall it be."** This is a sublime allusion to gospel times, when the knowledge of God's glory shall cover the habitable globe ; and no wonder if, with such expressive language upon their minds, the apostles, as well as the Jews, sought for " living water" to represent the purity, diffusive nature, and cleansing influence of Christianity.

The same train of thought is carried, for the same purposes, into the new dispensation. Jesus himself says : " If

* Baptism, 345. † Lev. xiv. 4, 5, 6, 50. ‡ Lev. xiv. 51, 52. § Lev. xv. 13.

¶ Num. xix. 17. || Jer. ii. 13, xvii. 13. ** Zech. xiv, 8.

thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith unto thee, Give me to drink ; thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water." Again : "He that believeth on me, as the Scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water."* Paul speaks of our drawing "near with a true heart, in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water."† But we are told of heaven itself : "For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters : and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes."‡ "And he showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb."§

If running water was thus enjoined under the former dispensation ; if living water be so frequently spoken of under the present ; and if living fountains in heaven symbolize the joys of the redeemed there, whilst a pure stream issues from Jehovah's throne, to "make glad the city of God" below, and to bless the ransomed above, the conclusion is Scriptural—let our opponents rage as they may—that John repaired to *Ænon* and similar localities, to obtain running or living water, and *not* for the purposes of immersion.

4th. Dipping. Lev. iv. 6.—"And the priest shall dip his finger in the blood, and sprinkle of the blood seven times before the Lord, before the vail of the sanctuary." Mr. M'Lean is confident that this verse proves immersion ; and he declares that we, who prefer the Scriptural mode of baptizing by pouring, to that of plunging, which is unknown in the Bible, are "guilty of rebellion against the Lord, and may justly expect immediate vengeance." Strong words these, on which we offer no comment, for they involve no argument, and we do not apprehend the woes which they predict. The verse de-

* John iv. 10, vii. 38. † Heb. x. 22. ‡ Rev. vii. 17. § Rev. xxii. 1.

serves, from the importance with which it is thus invested, a brief consideration. The passage, then, is distinct proof against immersion, and is one of the best illustrations in the Bible of our practice. Dipping the finger does not necessarily imply the dipping of the whole of it. Nay, for the purpose of sprinkling—as on the present occasion—it commonly means the dipping of the tip of the finger, and not total immersion. The priest, as God appointed, dipt his finger in the blood which he then sprinkled. The mere act of dipping the finger was not the religious act, but preparatory to it: the sprinkling of the blood was the religious part of the ceremony. So we dip our hand in the water—which is not the religious part of the rite—then pour the uplifted water on the baptized individual, and this is the sacred part of the institution. If, for this strict compliance with the Scriptures, we be denounced by our opponents as “guilty of rebellion against the Lord, and may justly expect immediate vengeance,” our reply is: To our own master we stand or fall; the Bible is our guide; and God is our judge.

5th. Washing. Acts, xxi. 16.—“And now, why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord.” In expounding this and similar passages, our opponents make washing and immersion to be synonymous. He is a very simple youth who needs to be informed that a person may wash himself, and never set his foot in the water. The terms are, in their common acceptation, understood by all, except by certain parties, to be directly opposed to the interpretation of immersionists. Baptism and washing are stated, even in this verse, to be distinct acts: Paul was first to submit to the one by man, and the other was to be performed by divine instrumentality. Nor is there the slightest allusion to the *mode* of baptism. In Titus, iii. 5, we have a full explanation of what was here meant—if any explanation was needed:—“Not by works of

righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost, which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour." On this verse Dr. Carson observes, p. 211: "Here baptism is called the bath or laver of regeneration. In the figure it is the place of birth." Mr. Noel also says, p. 182: "Baptism—was the bath of regeneration." The man who can discover baptismal regeneration in this verse, must have very confused notions of the Christian ordinance. He had previously told us, that the remission of sins preceded the act of baptism, and here he repeats, for the fifth or sixth time, that the blessing is obtained by baptism itself! The baptism of an adult is merely a public declaration that he believes he has been born again, and is *not* "the bath of regeneration"—or the act of his being made a new creature in Christ Jesus. This transformation being the effect of no external ceremony, is the exclusive work of the Spirit of God as the agent, and the atonement of Immanuel as the means. Who, then, except very unsafe expositors of Scripture, would discover immersion in the text, and draw from it the above conclusions? Immersionists are perpetually charging us with Popish notions, whilst their own language is outrageously papistical. No Puseyite could, to express his peculiar sentiments, select better terms than those employed by our opponents. Paul, however, simply means that by regeneration, which is effected by the "renewing of the Holy Ghost," we are freed from both the guilt and pollution of sin. He explicitly teaches that there is *no* immersion: for he tells us that the Holy Spirit is "*shed* on us." If, therefore, there be an allusion to the mode of baptism, that mode is pouring and not plunging.

No importance is attached by Ananias, or by Paul, to the manner in which the water is applied, but solely to its cleansing efficacy. As possessed of that efficacy, it is emblematical

of the purifying influences of the Holy Spirit in cleansing from sin ; and the symbolical language in both passages above quoted, is intended to illustrate that cleansing power. The term *washing*, therefore, affords our opponents no support ; though we may be taught the propriety of having pure water in all religious ceremonies.

6th. I. Cor. x. 1, 2.—“ Moreover, brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant, how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea ; and were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea.” Mr. Noel says : “ Now, just as they descended into the sea, and were buried by the sea and by the cloud, and then emerged from them, so the Corinthians had descended into the waters of baptism, had been buried by them, and then emerged.”* We have given his own words, which are plainly contradicted by the Scriptures, to prevent the possibility of mistake or misrepresentation. This author’s exposition is deemed quite conclusive, and we must consider its value. Had the verses been quoted by him to prove that the Egyptians, who were certainly immersed, were baptized, we could have understood their force. Had they taught that the Hebrews were under the sea as well as under the cloud—as Mr. Noel says they were, then they would have proved immersion. But the whole history of Israel’s wonderful deliverance was written to commemorate the glorious fact, that they were *not* immersed :—“ For the horse of Pharaoh went in with his chariots and with his horsemen into the sea, and the Lord brought again the waters of the sea upon them ; but the children of Israel went on dry land in the midst of the sea.†” Here Moses plainly writes that the Hebrews “ went on dry land ;” and they were “ in the midst of the sea,” because its waters stood like bulwarks on each side of them. Yet one author gravely tells us, that the Israelites were baptized “ *as if*” by

* Essay on Baptism, 39. † Ex. xv. 19.

immersion. This is an addition to the Bible, contrived to defend a favourite system not found in the Scriptures. The individual, guilty of so sporting with sacred truth, places himself beyond the pale of reason ; and so to tamper with the words of inspiration, is, by converting them into a mere instrument of partizan contention, to destroy them as a divine rule of practice. Such a man can as easily convert into a perfect immersion, the stepping into an empty baptistery, as the going down of the Hebrews into the dry bed of the sea !

The subjects of capital punishment *were* immersed, but *not* the people of God. Paul speaks of these facts in few, simple, and striking words :—"By faith they passed through the Red Sea as by dry land ; which the Egyptians assaying to do were drowned."* Pharaoh's hosts were undoubtedly immersed ; but it was with a terrible destruction ! The apostle distinctly affirms that the Hebrews walked on dry ground ; and his explicit statement we prefer to the conjectures of any individual or party. Besides, in their eagerness for immersion, our opponents appear insensible to the fact, that they overturn their loved doctrine of adult-baptism ; for, if the Israelitish parents were immersed, so were the youngest of their offspring. What is supposed to be a stronghold of their cause on the one hand, thus completely destroys it on the other. Such is the fate of untenable creeds.

But the Israelites "were all under the cloud, and were baptized unto Moses in the cloud." Mr. Noel says that the cloud "spread over their heads along the deep avenue of the sea."† This is another fanciful supposition : the *Bible* does not say so. To be under a cloud, is to be under its shadow, protection, or guidance ; and if it does discharge rain, that rain falls upon us ; we are not immersed in it, except by strong figurative language, which is universally understood *not* to imply immersion. Respecting even this cloud, the

* Heb. xi. 29. † Essay on Baptism, 39.

Psalmist clearly informs us that there was a pouring out, no immersion ; but, leaving us to obtain the requisite information from other sources, he does not state whether that pouring out was upon the Israelites or the Egyptians. In alluding to that awful scene, he employs the following sublime words : " The waters saw thee, O God, the waters saw thee ; they were afraid : the depths also were troubled. The clouds poured out water : the skies sent out a sound : thine arrows also went abroad, &c."* Neither in the sea nor in the cloud, was there an immersion ; we are led to believe that not an article of dress, not the sole of the foot, of one Israelite was wet. And farther, it is entirely forgotten that the cloud, which was midnight darkness to the Egyptians, was light as day to the camp of God's people : " And the angel of God, which went before the camp of Israel, removed and went behind them ; and the pillar of the cloud went from before their face, and stood behind them. And it came between the camp of the Egyptians and the camp of Israel ; and it was a cloud of darkness to them, but it gave light by night to these : so that the one came not near the other all the night."† This cloud, then, according to the Scripture narrative, was in the form of a pillar " and stood *behind* them ;" it was *not* " spread over their heads along the deep avenue of the sea ;" it neither discharged its contents upon the Israelites, nor even enveloped them ; it stood behind them as a protection from their enemies, and kindly lighted them in their flight. This is the plain account of the Bible, and no man is justifiable in perverting it into an auxiliary for sectarian purposes.

The Israelites were " under the cloud," as it shielded them from the foe and guided them in their flight : they " were baptized unto Moses ;" that is, they believed in his divine mission, confided in the God who sent him, and who so miraculously wrought out their deliverance ; and the Corinthians

* Ps. lxxvii. 16, 20. † Ex. xiv. 19, 20.

were baptized unto Christ, because they received him as the sent of God, the teacher and Saviour of mankind. To be "plunged *into* Moses," and "plunged *into* Christ," as if they were liquids, is the immersionist rendering of the words ; but is so monstrous that our opponents are obliged to renounce their own principles of interpretation, and exclaim : "Oh no ; they were not liquids, for we ascertain from other parts of Scripture what they were and what the terms mean." Exactly so : and we learn from other portions of the Bible, than such as Mark xvi. 16, that children are entitled to baptism ; and we both now reason in the same common-sense manner. We sincerely wish, for the comfort of both parties, that they would adhere to this rational line of argument.

This passage, therefore, which is thought so conclusive for their opinions and destructive of ours, supplies the strongest evidence that they are wrong and we are right. It proves, 1. If adults were baptized, so were infants. 2. The Israelites walked on dry land ; and *if* they were drenched, it was by rain falling on them, not by their being immersed. 3. No rain could fall, for the cloud gave them light. 4. That cloud, being in the form of a pillar, was a *shade* unto them, inasmuch as it was a defence from their enemies. 5. The water touched neither their persons nor clothes. 6. Before this baptism, no public confession of faith was made. For these reasons, we can allow no human conjecture to rob us of the plain statements of Scripture, which are so detrimental to immersionists.

7th. Rom. vi. 4, 6.—"Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death ; that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection. Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed,

that henceforth we should not serve sin." This passage is regarded the strongest in the Bible in favour of immersion; and worthy men declare that, if plunging is not here, it is not in the Scriptures. Dr. Carson affirms, p. 384,—"*Buried with Christ in baptism*, must mean that baptism has a resemblance to Christ's burial. Were the angel Gabriel to hesitate, I would order him to school, &c." The writer who can deliberately make such reckless assertions, must be hopelessly immersed in a monomania. He assumes there must be a literal burial in baptism; though he might as well suppose that there must be a literal crucifixion in order "that the body of sin might be destroyed;" or a literal planting, that we may be "quickened together with Christ." He again writes: "In our baptism, then, we are emblematically laid in the grave with Christ, &c. To immerse a living man, affords an emblem of death as well as of burial. The baptized person dies under the water, and for a moment lies buried with Christ."* In short, he can thus bury a believer because he is dead, or bury him to make him die:†—anything to gain immersion. Such a burial, however, would need to be only for a *moment*. But was Christ's for such a brief period? He was three days and three nights in the grave, and there is no more authority from the passage for immersion, than for the baptized party continuing under water for the same period of time; the apostle neither puts nor keeps us under the water, and we can permit none to misapply his language.

We are informed that, "as Christ was let down into the grave, so should the baptized party be let down into the water." Now, supposing that their allusions to Christ's burial, on which the whole strength of their cause here rests, were correct—which they are not—this makes baptism a dramatic representation of his interment, thereby destroying its symbolical character, whilst Peter has already plainly

* Baptism, 144, 157. † P. 411.

taught us, that it exhibits the outpouring and cleansing efficacy of the Holy Spirit. The apostle thus makes it emblematical of pouring; they make it dramatically represent death, burial, and resurrection. Immersionists and the Bible are therefore at complete variance. Why they should fix upon being buried with Christ, and overlook our being planted with him in the likeness of his death, and having our old man crucified with him, is perhaps not difficult to discover. The word baptism has alone the appearance of countenancing their theory, and the others are consequently neglected. The believer's dead body is buried in order to its resurrection on the day of judgment; though he himself is never represented as being planted or sown like a seed, in order "to newness of life." But the apostle employs all the figurative expressions in the passage to teach the same doctrine, that justification and sanctification are both obtained by grace through Jesus; and that, in every genuine believer, there are a death unto sin and resurrection unto holiness; but in these, there is no more an actual immersion enjoined, than there is an actual crucifixion.

It is likewise unfortunate for our opponents' exposition, that Jesus, being carried into a tomb cut in the side of a rock, was *not* let down into the grave. There is no "resemblance" whatever between a person's being plunged into the water, and Christ's being carried into Joseph's sepulchre. The assumption, therefore, on which immersion rests in the passage, and on which it entirely depends, is not historically true, for, we repeat, Jesus was *not* let down into the grave. Besides, he was in the bowels of the earth until the Lord's purposes of mercy were accomplished, and it is his sovereign pleasure that we *remain* buried with Christ. Our death and burial in our Saviour are not figurative, but real, spiritual acts, and are continued. Just so long as we are "dead indeed unto sin," and buried with Christ, do we continue "alive

unto God." Our spiritual life follows our spiritual death and interment : there cannot be the one without the other, and the continuance of the one essentially depends upon the duration of the other. Our opponents make our burial with Jesus in baptism to be " for a moment ;" the Bible makes it to be for eternity ! Such is the important difference between immersionists and the word of God.

The apostle is speaking of baptism in connection with Christ's *death*, and not exclusively with either his burial or resurrection. Now Jesus suffered death on the uplifted cross, not by being buried in the ground, or any way covered out of sight ; and since he was lifted up, and the immersed individuals are let down, such a baptism can, by no possibility, be made either a dramatic or figurative representation of his crucifixion. Again, if baptism symbolizes his death, as some affirm, then, contrary to the divine procedure, both baptism and the Lord's Supper, which are *distinct signs*, are made strangely and unnecessarily to represent the same thing. Immersion, too, may kill and bury a man, but it cannot raise him again. *Baptiso* never once signifies the complex act of submersion and emersion conjoined. It therefore expresses only one-half of their baptism by plunging, and another word must be found to express the other half ; it may put the believer under the water, but it leaves him there. Mr. M'Lean tells us : " Immersion is not a mode of baptism, but the very thing itself." Nothing else, therefore, can with him be the genuine rite, and we would naturally imagine that his immersion was complete baptism ; yet he informs us in the very next sentence, that the ordinance is not complete until a symbolical resurrection takes place ! This most significant part of their ordinance is not in immersion at all ; and if either the burial or resurrection should be deemed the main part of the institution, the latter is clearly entitled to that pre-eminence : for burial dooms a man to gloom, whilst resurrection blesses

him with life. Having wandered from the true nature and mode of baptism, as taught by John and Peter, our opponents gather into it various things—some of them essentially distinct—quarrel among themselves and abuse others, and are at last obliged, in violation of all sound criticism, to make baptism a complex dramatic representation of Christ's death, burial, and resurrection also ! All this is done, too, in direct opposition to the apostle, who has told us that baptism is symbolical of the mode and efficacy of the Spirit's operations. We are, therefore, buried with Christ *in* baptism, but not baptized *as* he was buried : his was an actual, ours a spiritual interment ; and it is to the fact, not to the mode, that the apostle alludes.

In the verses from Romans, and also Col. ii. 12,—which has the same meaning, the apostle in symbolizing *spiritual death*, places circumcision, baptism, planting, and crucifixion, upon an equality, and employs them all for the same purpose. He does not allude to the particular mode of either ; but to the benefits which the genuine believer derives from spiritual circumcision, baptism, interment, planting, and crucifixion. Baptism, for instance, symbolizes the mode in which the Spirit comes into contact with the souls of men ; the water represents the purifying efficacy of that Spirit ; and in consequence of obtaining the reality which is prefigured in the ordinance, we are said to be buried with Christ—that is, become “dead unto sin ;” and are said to be circumcised, planted, and crucified. Baptism symbolizes none of these things, but they follow as consequences from our being baptized by “the water and the Spirit ;” and immersionists do not perceive that each of these figurative expressions has an equal right to force its meaning upon those who are united to Jesus.

Dr. Carson confesses, p. 411, that “*under water* is not in the passage : this is known from the rite, and is here supplied

by ellipsis." It is *not* known from the rite; for neither Greeks, Jews, nor Christians, had any such institution, and moderns endeavour to force upon them an ordinance of which they were ignorant. "Under water" is neither expressed nor understood in the passage, and is a human invention, devised to favour an unscriptural practice. We are said to be "buried *with* him," not *like* him, and that "*by* (or *in*) baptism into death." But into the death of whom? or what? Mr. Noel says: "unto (his) death;"* that is, unto the death of Christ. The Bible does not teach us so. It is neither unto his death, nor unto our own, but *unto the death of sin*, that we may rise "with him through the faith of the operation of God." It is not the mode of baptism, whether that mode be pouring or immersion, that is likened unto his death, burial, and resurrection, for it cannot resemble all these modes, so dissimilar to each other; it is what we become by the spiritual effects of baptism—"dead unto sin, and alive unto God." We are thus buried with him *in* baptism, and rise with him to newness of life, because, being pardoned and sanctified by the Spirit, "our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed."

What is the proper "*ellipsis*," therefore, in the passage, the apostle alone can answer: nor has he left the matter in doubt. He is speaking of the great end and design of baptism, not of the mode. He and his fellow Christians had been charged with teaching "Let us do evil that good may come." To refute this calumny, he proves that justification by faith necessarily leads to holiness of life, and therefore the charge was unfounded. He was not so anxious to defend himself, as to vindicate the doctrines and precepts of Scripture. Circumcision was the sign of faith in a coming Messiah, and was a public recognition of the holy will of God, as a rule of conduct; baptism is a sign of faith in Christ as having appeared to re-

* Essay on Baptism, vi.

deem the world, and is a sacred pledge to walk in his holy footsteps. Christ's burial was a proof of his death, and the baptism of believers, being an evidence that they profess to be dead unto sin and buried to it with Christ, solemnly bound them *not* to "do evil, that good may come." The apostle does not refer to any particular mode of baptism, but, in treating of sanctification, he employs here, as he frequently does elsewhere, a variety of figurative language. Baptism is neither the death, the grave, the burial, the resurrection, nor the birth-place of the believer. It is an act by which an adult, in giving external evidence of his internal convictions, expresses his faith, and publicly gives himself up to the pure and peaceful service of Jesus. It is also one of those means which, like the Lord's Supper, the Spirit employs for our spiritual edification and advancement in grace. Circumcision, baptism, planting, crucifixion, and Christ's death, burial, and resurrection, all teach the same lesson, that the true child of God is pledged and bound to hate sin and flee from it, to love and pursue after holiness, "that henceforth we should not serve sin." Hence it is evident, that it was the thing signified, and not the sign, which the apostle here calls being buried with Christ. Neither of the passages above quoted, therefore, in which our opponents repose such implicit confidence, and which they regard as their only stronghold, affords a shadow of support to their system, for, whatever evidence the verses give—if any at all—respecting the mode of baptism, is against immersion.

Several cases of baptism mentioned in the New Testament are clearly opposed to the idea of immersion. Dr. Carson defends these cases by supposing it was *possible* that immersion was the mode. The advocate who takes refuge in possibility to destroy probability, must be hard pressed by counter argument, shakes the foundation on which the greater portion of human transactions are conducted, destroys the evi-

dence of many important historical facts, and can make the Scriptures seem to favour any system. It is possible that the sun may not rise to-morrow, but he is a more prudent man who thinks it probable that it will ; after all the husbandman's toils in spring, it is possible that his hopes may be disappointed by an unproductive autumn, but few are so unwise as to permit that possibility to prevent them from cultivating their fields. Among the above cases we find,

I. Paul's baptism in the house of Judas at Damascus. Acts, ix. 18.—“ And immediately there fell from his eyes as it had been scales ; and he received sight forthwith, and arose and was baptized.” The Scriptures give no intimation that Paul left the apartment ; he forthwith receives his sight, arises, and the ordinance of baptism is there and then performed. This is the plain narrative. Our opponents will supply us with baths, fountains, and rivers, to any extent and to meet all exigencies ; to which we reply, it is pure imagination, is contrary to the unadorned record, and it is possible, nay, probable, that no such conveniences were at hand. There might, or might not, be a bath in the house. There is no information that the convert and his friends repaired to either fountain or river ; and had they done so, it is not likely that the circumstance would have been omitted in a relation which informs us that Paul had sufficient strength remaining to stand upon his feet ! He had fasted for three days ; he was enfeebled by want of food and by agitation of mind ; it was the depth of winter, being about the 25th of January ; and immersion would have been cruel and dangerous. Dr. Carson says, in his usual uncharitable style, “ I consider such reasoning as the most egregious trifling.”* So, it is “ the most egregious trifling” to urge that a man, of whom the Spirit of God condescends to tell us that he could stand upon his feet, was so enfeebled that he could not do what required his full

* Baptism, 356.

strength ! Who, then, is the trifier ? We enforce no new meaning upon the word *baptiso* in reference to Paul ; but we do say that, whatever was the meaning of the word in its own language, Paul knew nothing of immersion as a public religious ordinance ; that to assert he was immersed is to give to *baptiso* an application of which even the Greeks were ignorant ; that immersion in his case would have been cruelty ; and that the Bible does not say he was immersed.

II. Much that we have stated regarding Paul, might apply to the jailor, to Lydia, Cornelius, Stephanas. The Philippian jailor "and all his," Cornelius and his family, were evidently baptized in their own houses. Whether the conversion of an individual occurred in his own house, in that of a stranger, in a dungeon, at midday or at midnight, there is not the slightest intimation that he retired to a bath, a fountain, or river, or that he moved from the place where his conversion was declared. His baptism uniformly took place immediately after his faith in Jesus and repentance were expressed, and *where* the declaration was made. This is not the practice of our opponents ; and the simple reason is, that their practice is not Scriptural. They have told us, and reasoned as if their assumption were indisputable, that because the words of institution are silent regarding children, therefore children are excluded ; and to suit their purpose now, they allege, in opposition to the complete silence of Scripture on these matters, that there were baths, ponds, fountains, and rivers, wherever needed for immersion. Silence is, in the one case, with them equivalent to positive evidence, and in the other it presents no difficulty. This is not fair reasoning.

III. The baptism of the Eunuch. Acts viii. 38, 39.—"And they went both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch ; and he baptized him. And when they were come up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip." By our opponents, very great importance is attached

to this case. Dr. Carson says, p. 128: "The man who can read it and not see *immersion* in it, must have something in his mind unfavourable to the investigation of truth. As long as I fear God, I cannot, for all the kingdoms of the world, resist the evidence of this single document. Nay, had I no more conscience than Satan himself, I could not as a scholar attempt to expel *immersion* from this account." He is always certain that some unworthy motive, or incapacity, must prevent us from submitting to his dictation: he is ever proclaiming his own sincerity, and thus creating a strong suspicion of the worth of his statements. We do not interfere with his conscience, nor do we enquire whether Satan has one or not; but we protest against his tyrannizing over ours, and we claim the liberty of reviewing the passage. The facts of the incident are simple.

1st. Both Philip and the eunuch, it is said, went *into*, and came *up out of* the water, and both, so far, did the same thing. Of these prepositions the Dr. had already said that they, "to every candid mind must ever prove immersion." Both Philip and the eunuch, therefore, according to his hypothesis, must have been plunged! He is very indignant when *we* say so, but if consistency and the supporting of an unsound theory be impossible, a man should at least endeavour not to contradict himself, and, having placed the rod in our hands, he should thank us when we smite him for his unintentional folly. Granting that the prepositions signify *in* and *out of* the water, our fishermen, who have an ordinary share of good sense, though perhaps little acquaintance with the niceties of verbal criticism, or with Greek literature, could easily explain the whole process, and prove distinctly that the words do *not* necessarily imply immersion. Besides, the act of baptism is something entirely distinct, in the narrative, from the parties being *in* and coming *out of* the water; and if both the prepositions and *baptizo* embrace plunging, then

both the passage and the ordinance become unintelligible ; and our opponents having here found two immersions,—one in the preposition, and a second in *baptiso*—are so far advanced towards a third with the heretical Greek Church.

2d. “He baptized him.” Our antagonists assume that *baptiso* signifies only to immerse, which we have proved it does not. They force upon the word an application—a religious plunging—which neither the Greeks, the Jews, nor the Christians give to it, and then argue as if their assumption were a reality. Peter tells us plainly the mode of baptism ; that mode was in strict harmony with previous divine institutions of consecration ; and all who acted under the instructions of the apostles would perform the ceremony as they did. There can be no doubt, therefore, if we permit the Bible—which is alone competent to judge, and not a practice unknown to even Homer—to decide the question, that pouring, and *not* immersion, was adopted on this occasion as on all others.

3d. Philip and the eunuch required *pure* water. Neither of them knew anything of immersion as a public religious rite. Our opponents can discover no reason for their descending to the water, whether it was a stream or a fountain, but for plunging. Dr. Carson, pp. 129, 410, is very explicit : —“ We found our argument upon the circumstance, that no reason can be given for the *going down* but the *immersion*.” We were not aware it was impossible that they could descend to the brink of the water at which they had arrived, that *living water* might be obtained, and the more readily applied by Philip to the person of the eunuch ; nor are we yet enlightened by the Doctor’s assumption, which is so contrary to the religious meaning of the word, and to the divinely prescribed mode of the ordinance. A pond of stagnant water would have been impure and unfit for the ceremony. True, we are told by immersionists, that the eunuch must have had an abundant supply of water provided for his journey through

the desert. Probably he had: perhaps not. Supposing that he had, was that water, thus far carried in vessels, now suited for the purpose, when better was at hand? It was unfit for a religious ceremony properly performed, when living water could be found. It is also said, that a servant might have brought a little from the spring, if pouring had been the mode. The eunuch's affairs can thus be managed with great ease, and servants, tents, water, change of raiment, and every convenience for a comfortable immersion provided for him, by individuals who, in making out their case, never consult his pleasure; who perpetually demand from their opponents explicit proof from the record, and who as frequently set imagination to work to establish their own cause. We cannot receive dreams for undoubted facts. We presume that Philip knew, without any man's officious interference, whether it was more proper to perform a religious ceremony through agents not yet dedicated to Jesus, than for himself to do the whole work.

To all our arguments here, it is answered: "Yet both Philip and the eunuch went not only to the water, but both of them went into the water, which lunacy itself would not allege as necessary for sprinkling."* Who alleges it was "necessary for sprinkling?" No one: but the insinuated folly afforded an opportunity for a burst of holy indignation, and the frail author could not resist the temptation. But it is lamentable, when men so recklessly set aside one portion of God's word to support a favourite theory by another. Was it *lunacy* when the Lord commanded the officiating priest to slay the sacrificial fowl over running water? when living water was prescribed for so many of the Jewish ceremonies? when living water was made symbolical by the inspired writers and Jesus himself, of the blessings of the Gospel upon earth, and its glories in heaven? or when the apostles, taught

* Baptism, 425.

by infinite wisdom, and anxious to realize the symbol to its utmost possible extent, sought pure water for the sacred ordinance of baptism? The man who truly fears God, and is solicitous to keep all his commandments, however and to whatever extent these may be revealed, will pause before he hazard the guilt of denouncing as lunacy the practice of the apostles.

If the eunuch was plunged, where was the river or fountain? No vestige of either remains; and the plain narrative of Scripture is that this baptism was performed in a desert. Dr. Carson may indeed reply: "I trample on such objections,"* and tell us immersion was "possible, and that is enough." It undoubtedly was possible for God to bring water to this desert from that of Sin, or to open an ample fountain on the spot; but where is the evidence? When we are told by man that a religious rite was performed in a conjectured manner, where the Lord informs us it could not be so observed, we cannot long hesitate which to believe. The same writer indeed, p. 425, in his eagerness to convince us that water was here abundant, *supposes* that people inhabited the district, and that the Israelites passed through this part of the country. We are told by the Bible it was a desert, but not that people dwelt in it: the Israelites as a people did *not* pass through this part of the country, for they were merely at Kadesh-barnea, which is nearly a hundred miles to the southward of this baptizing place! Such is the difference between the Scriptures and our opponents.

The sum of our investigation, therefore, is, 1. The prepositions *eis* and *ek* may simply mean *to* and *out from*, the water, and that the parties did not wet a foot. 2. Though Philip and the eunuch went *into*, and came *out from* the water, this is no evidence that they were immersed. 3. The words are merely descriptive of their descending to, and ascending from the fountain or stream, the brink of which they had ap-

* Baptism, 371.

proached for the greater convenience of administering the ordinance. 4. The act of baptism would be performed in accordance with the well known mode of dedication. 5. Philip would baptize by pouring, as Peter had taught. 6. There is no indication of a place suited for plunging. 7. Their going to the water was to obtain, according to the divine law, pure or living water, and not for immersion, of which both Philip and the eunuch were ignorant. The passage thought to be so conclusive for our opponents, thus gives them *no* support.

IV. The baptism of the three thousand on the day of Pentecost—the 24th of May—gives our opponents no difficulty. They find—that is, they invent—baths, pools, baptizers, and water, in such abundance, that the whole work was easily performed within the specified time. Their expressions here are very startling. After assuming that all the pools around Jerusalem were full to overflowing, that they were completely adapted for immersion, and that the derided converts had free access to them, they tell us: “The difficulties and improbabilities are all grounded on superstitious views of the ordinance. The performance of baptism is not confined to office—this is the mummery of Babylon.”* This worthy man is frequently dealing with Popery; no wonder that his own sentiments and language savour so much of the Vatican, and he is insensible to the fact. What he means in the above quotation is not very clear. Does he insinuate that it is “superstitious” to plead for that mode alone of dispensing the rite, which the Bible enjoins, in opposition to one of which even the heathen would have been ashamed? Was it “the mummery of Babylon” when the Lord ordained his ministers to officiate, on behalf of the people, under the old economy? Is it “the mummery of Babylon” that Jesus has established different orders and offices in the new dispensa-

* Baptism, 370.

tion? Is it "the mummery of Babylon" that all things should continue to "be done decently and in order?"* Our only apology for the Doctor's sweeping denunciation of an arrangement established by the Head of the Church is, that he was ignorant of the full import of his own language; and since it is evident that he did not fully comprehend the words, a farther refutation of them is unnecessary.

In treating of those baptized on the day of Pentecost, immersionists lightly esteem the historical facts, that, as the "latter rains" had long ceased, water was then scarce and precious in Jerusalem; that pure water was indispensable for every individual baptized; that the apostles had aroused public hostility, by inveighing, with vehemence, against the inhabitants and rulers of the city, as being the murderers of their Lord and Master; that the Christians were a despised and persecuted sect; and that the unconverted Jews, refusing them both water and baths, would raise every possible obstruction to the performance of the rite. They will tell us exactly the dimensions of the pools of Siloam, Bethesda, Hezekiah, and Gihon, as if their magnitude were certain evidence that they were *always* full, or that their contents could be employed in any manner by every party; they will also carry us to the brook Kidron, as if, at any time, it were fitted for immersion, and as if it were not known that its channel for the greater part of the year is entirely dry; and will thus supply, with the utmost ease, more water than enough for all their purposes. Alleging that there was an abundance of water, they also assume that the contemned and harassed Christians, who had recently barricaded their door for fear of enraged intruders, had free access to these reservoirs to use them as they pleased. It was now the intense heat of summer, when water was valuable; a large supply was needed, for the city was crowded

* I. Cor. xiv. 40.

with worshippers during the feast ; the immersion of a single individual in a pool or bath, rendered the water unclean, and therefore unfit for both religious and common purposes. All these difficulties, so insurmountable to calm reason, afford no obstacle to the *imagination* of our opponents. Tell Dr. Carson that a man was *baptized*, even in a desert, where a handful of water was never known to exist, and he instantly assumes that the word means, in its native tongue, only to immerse—though he himself proves that it does not ; that it must have the same signification when applied to a Christian institution ; that the person must have been immersed ; and after so violating all historical evidence, and the rules of human belief, he will exclaim, “ *Assume ! I assume nothing.*”^{*} We might pity the followers of such men, were they not so vain and exclusive ; and perhaps they deserve the more pity because they are so. But we prefer the plain statements of the Bible, and the dictates of common-sense, to the fanciful speculations of any party.

V. But the multitudes baptized by John are not so readily disposed of, and our opponents are prudently more silent on the subject. He had six months in which to do his work. According to the calculations of immersionists themselves, eighteen minutes are requisite to baptize one person. With the greatest haste, eighteen individuals may be immersed in one hour ; but the baptizer could not long endure such fatigue. In Mat. iii. 5, 6, we are told : “ Then went out unto him Jerusalem, and all Judea, and all the region round about Jordan. And were baptized of him in Jordan, confessing their sins.” Upon the lowest reasonable estimate, John, besides travelling, preaching, exhorting, warning, threatening, and hearing declarations of faith and repentance, stood twelve hours in the water daily for six months, baptizing 1,280 persons every day, and 107 in an hour, or nearly two

* Baptism, 454.

every minute ! Nothing but a miracle could have sustained him in such a task ; and no miracle is recorded. It was therefore a moral impossibility, if he was an immerisionist, for him to accomplish the work in the specified time ; but if pouring, which was the Scriptural mode of performing such a ceremony, and the only one known to John, was his practice, then all is easy and natural. John therefore did *not* immerse, because it was impossible, as well as unscriptural.

We are anxious to do full justice to our opponents, and we must therefore not forget that Dr. Carson says, p. 340 : "Does any one who deserves the name of a lexicographer or grammarian understand *en* as signifying *at*, in reference to the phrase *en Iordane*." Yes. The Doctor himself says, p. 339, "He might be in the river, yet not in the water ; all within the banks is the river." John, therefore, was "within the banks," but *at* the river. The Doctor thus, unwittingly no doubt, becomes our warmest advocate, when he throws aside the trammels of party, and speaks in accordance with the rules of criticism, though he thereby completely destroys his own system, which assumes that both the baptizer and the baptized parties were actually and necessarily *in the water*, as well as "within the banks."

Mr. Noel tells us—"When John began to preach he found immersion to be an initiatory rite by which the Jews admitted converts to the ordinances of their religion, and when he began to baptize he would naturally adopt their baptism."* He would have received the thanks of the religious world had he proved what he here assumes, and without the proving of which, his subsequent arguments are destitute of force, that the Jews actually *so* baptized converts. But waiving for the present this question, so essential in the debate, Would John "naturally adopt" a mode of performing a sacred ordinance, which was superstitious and had no sanc-

* Essay on Baptism, 61.

tion from the Scriptures? No: he might as well have adopted the practice of tithing anise, mint, and cummin, and of omitting the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith.* He would "naturally adopt" the only mode of consecrating individuals to the privileges of the Church, which the divine laws of that Church and the Spirit of God recognised. The Bible, and not "vain traditions of men," would be his guide. Our author, in supporting his hypothesis, produces a quotation from the Mishna—a collection of oral traditions, whose date is variously fixed, and which was compiled, according to the most authentic evidence, about the year of our Lord 150, or 220. He would thus make John "naturally adopt" a system, of whose existence we have no reliable proof until nearly centuries after that John had ceased from his labours and entered upon his rest! Nor is this all. Admitting that the Mishna enjoined an adult proselyte to *wash* his body, Do our opponents inform us that the law of Moses required that he should do it for himself and by himself? No: they were bound in equity to state the whole case; but they tell us that the Mishna prescribes that certain witnesses should be present, merely to certify the deed, and not to perform the ceremony. The washed person was afterwards affused or sprinkled by the priest, and pronounced sanctified. The private and individual act of washing was thus merely preparatory to the religious and public dedication of the person. Do they inform us that, after circumeision and purification by water, the proselyte's reception into the Jewish Church secured also the reception of his children? No: for this truth would have militated against their system. On these subjects, God revealed fixed statutes, and men subverted them by superstitious ceremonies and conjectures, and others would now force them on the Church as being sanctioned by Scripture!

* Matt. xxiii. 23.

The same writer so vacillates between positive and assumed immersion, the efficacy and inefficacy of the means of grace, that scarcely any party can claim him for a friend. He says: "There are strong grounds for believing that John immersed."* Only "*strong grounds* for believing"! And this after assuring us, and giving a long list of supposed proofs, that *baptizo* signifies *only* to immerse; and after building his system upon that assumption, and then lecturing us affectionately upon our blindness in not seeing exactly as he does! However doubtfully he may, in the present instance, speak on this department of the subject, he easily finds ample time for John to do his work. He writes: "But if great numbers were baptized, it is easy to conceive that it might be administered in such a manner as to occupy little more time than sprinkling. Why might not the converts enter the river in companies, and, dipping themselves beneath the water, receive from him a benediction at the same time with the imposition of his hands?"† So our friends can plunge themselves! This part of their scheme will be new to some of our readers. We did not know that a man's immersing himself was identically the same with his being plunged by another. We did not even know that the first of these acts had any resemblance to Scriptural baptism:—nor do we know yet. But we now properly understand why this author adduces the Hindoos—bathing on their religious festivals—to prove immersion and illustrate a Bible ordinance. Truly, our opponents have unruly imaginations: it is a pity that they do not maintain more scriptural consistency in their arguments. *It is essential to Christian baptism that it be dispensed by another.* This is the uniform doctrine of the Bible. Our opponents are, therefore, merely partial baptizers. To do their work properly, they should take up the subject and plunge him into the water. Were they really to immerse

* Essay on Baptism, 76. † Ibid, P. 79.

their converts, strange scenes would sometimes occur between feeble ministers and lusty subjects—if fatal consequences would not frequently follow. It is not long since that, according to Thorn, on a winter day, a female was baptized in the Hudson near to New York; the officiating minister lost his hold; the unfortunate female went below the ice, and never rose again! That cannot be an ordinance of Christ which involves in its very observance such dangers to health and life. No wonder that our opponents find so little employment in frozen regions, and limit their missionary labours to milder and more genial climates.

An appeal in favour of immersion is made to the practice of the Greek Church. We observe, 1. In general the members of that community are not immersed. The infant is placed in the baptismal font, (*baptisterion*), with less water than covers the body, and the water is brought partly over the body by the hands of the baptizer, as if the child were enveloped, *not* immersed. The act of so lifting and *pouring* the water is repeated three times; once in the name of the Father, a second in the name of the Son, and a third in the name of the Holy Spirit. 2. When an individual, old or young, is unable to be so placed and enveloped, water is simply poured upon him three times, and this mode is equally valid with the other. 3. Both Robinson and Booth—keen immersionists—confess that after the trine immersion, which is merely preparatory to the rite, water is *poured* on the head, which is the act of baptism itself. 4. Sprinkling or pouring is deemed perfectly sufficient, and those so baptized are never immersed or enveloped on subsequently entering the communion of that Church. 5. They baptize infants as well as adults, just as we do. The Greek Church, therefore, except in the case of some adult converts, gives decisive evidence in our favour, and *against* adult baptism by immersion. Of this brief and plain statement of the practice in the Greek Church, the most unlearned of our readers is competent to judge.

How was immersion introduced into the Church? The earliest trace of its history, according to our opponents themselves, is discovered about the third century; and *if* there be proof for it then, that evidence is equally relevant to infant baptism. Pouring or sprinkling has been, and still is, the principal part if not the whole of the ceremony of baptism throughout the churches of Christendom. These churches may have existed from the days of the apostles in Syria, Ceylon, or the East Indies, and may have been separated from all other Christians; but pouring or sprinkling, and the admission of children, have been their universal practice. Even all the sculpture and paintings of the greatest antiquity on the subject, which are the surest criterion of ancient modes and ceremonies, give the same testimony.*

It is not easy sometimes to ascertain precisely, when, how, where, and by whom, superstitious ceremonies originated. The Lord's Supper was early converted into a common meal at which gross excesses were committed; and immersion sprang up when men supposed that the more of the sign they enjoyed, they received the more of the reality. The prescribed emblem is both water and mode, and the Spirit having specified the mode, we have no license to manufacture another; but over-zealous individuals began, like Peter, to say: "Not my feet only, but my hands and my head." As a full meal was believed to insure the more of the Lord's body and blood, it was also imagined that a full immersion secured the more of the Holy Spirit. Men thus acted on the unscriptural principle, that promised blessings were to be expected in proportion to the extent of the symbol employed. The mode was to them emblematical of a complete immersion in the Spirit, and therefore essential to the rite, according to their superstitious notions of its import. The Bible dispels these illusions, and should bring men back to sober judgment: but the vain heart is the same in all ages.

* Robinson's Hist. of Baptism, pp. 58, 83, 107, 125.

The practice of the early Christians is in strict harmony with pouring, as being the scriptural mode of baptism. No authentic instance of immersion is made out, even by our opponents, until the time already stated, when baptismal fastings and regeneration, charms and anointing with oil, crossings and exorcisms, with other unmeaning and superstitious rites, were introduced, which have been long since styled Popish. This very late and scanty evidence, produced to establish adult, is equally strong, as we have seen, in proving infant immersion. The views of our antagonists, therefore, are decidedly opposed to history, reason, and Scripture.

Nor should it be forgotten that, along with the first instances of immersion, the parties were baptized in a state of nudity. Immersionists are commonly silent on this theme, and the ignorant among them are generally indignant when the subject is mentioned. Some of them are more honest, and make no attempt to conceal the truth. Mr. Wall, who was favourable to the immersion of both infants and adults, says: "They took great care for preserving the modesty of any woman that was to be baptized. There was none but women came near or in sight till she was undressed, and her body in the water; then the priest came, and putting her head also under water, used the form of baptism. Then he departed, and the women took her out of the water, and clothed her again in white garments."* By thus casting aside her old raiment, and being dressed in new, she was supposed to have cast off, symbolically, her spiritual depravity, and to put on the purity of the Gospel!

Mr. Robinson of Cambridge, a strenuous advocate of adult baptism by immersion, admits "There is no ancient historical fact better authenticated than this. The evidence does not go on the single word *naked*, for then a reader might suspect allegory; but on many facts reported, and many reasons

* De Baptismo, Disp. i. c. 6, 7, 8.

assigned for the practice. One of these facts is this:—Chrysostom criminales Theophilus because ‘he had raised a disturbance without, which so frightened the women in the baptistery, who had just stripped themselves naked in order to be baptized, that they fled naked out of the room, without having time to consult the modesty of their sex.’ Another is this; ‘Basil rose up with fear and trembling, undressed himself, putting off the old man, and went down praying into the water; and the priest going down along with him, baptized him.’ The reasons assigned for this practice are, that Christians ought to put off the old man before they put on a profession of Christianity; that as men came naked into the world, so they ought to come naked into the Church, for rich men could not enter into the kingdom of heaven; that it was an imitation of Christ who laid aside his glory, and made himself of no reputation for them; and that Adam had forfeited all, and Christians ought to profess to be restored to the enjoyment of all, only by Jesus Christ.”* Do any of our modern females imitate their ancient sisters? But let these quotations suffice on this offensive part of the subject. It would not be easy, however, to produce, even from the most violent advocates of the Papacy, a passage more full of Popery than the last, which might teach our furious opponents, who mistake abuse for argument, greater caution in their charges.

Modern inventions have softened down the disgusting features of former immersions, and rendered the ceremony so far tolerable to a religious public. Baptistries, though not invented till the sixth century, are very convenient things, and are sometimes secluded. But weights at the bottom of the robe, to prevent it from floating on the surface of the water and exposing the naked body of a female, were neither thought of nor needed by the primitive immersionists. New flannel dresses—which are more impervious than old ones to

* History of Baptism, Chap. xv. p. 85.

the water—fastened tightly at the neck, wrists, and ankles, to keep the skin dry ; and especially water-proof garments, which are an ingenious and comfortable contrivance—though very like a mockery of their own ordinance, were never dreamt of by honest Basil, nor by the women so frightened by the ungallant Theophilus. But after every allowance, a female in such dishabille, coming out of the baptistery, with her clothes dripping and clinging to her person, exposed to the gaze of a promiscuous audience, is an indelicate spectacle, and is most repulsive to the spirituality and modesty of the gospel. It is a process to which the sick, the invalid, the feeble, the timid, and the modest, can never submit ; is a shock to some constitutions which has frequently proved fatal ; and this is one of the strongest proofs that it is unscriptural. We know that individuals boast of their willingness to take up the cross and suffer all for Christ's sake ; that in no respect are they ashamed to own Jesus, or to bear his reproach. Such boastful language, uttered when there is no fear of trial, may gratify a morbid and diseased mind ; may be fuel to one's vanity ; but the question is, What does Christ require of us in his ordinances ? and not, What are we prepared to suffer for his cause by persecution or scorn ?

We may be told by Dr. Carson* and others, that all this is an appeal to our pride. It is an appeal to the Scriptures, which, for decency sake, prescribed a certain dress for the priests, when they ascended the altar before the congregation.† Even their ritual respected good order too much for the modern practice ; and it was reserved for more degenerate times to violate that decency which God has ever required in his worship. Nor is less delicacy enjoined now, than under an economy comparatively rude. The Holy Spirit has provided for even the covering of a female's head in the house and service of the Lord.‡ Let us hold fast, therefore, the

* Baptism, 165. † Ex. xxviii. 42, 43. ‡ I. Cor. xi. 5, I. Tim. ii. 9.

faith and practice revealed in the Bible, and originally delivered to the saints ; for infant baptism is one of the keystones of the Church, and immersion is a mere human and recent endeavour to improve upon the Scriptures. May we walk worthy of our high vocation and baptismal engagements. Let us avoid, as the plague-spot of the Churches, that party-spirit and self-sufficiency which deaden a sense of justice to fellow Christians, darken the understanding to what is lovely and loving beyond the narrow bounds of a sectarian fold, and arrest the outgoings of humanity's sympathies to our brother man. Let us rejoice that in heaven all the imperfections which now mar the unity, beauty, and energies of Christ's household, shall be forgotten, whilst the redeemed shall see clearly and for ever, " eye to eye, and face to face."

B A P T I S M.

S I X T H A N D L A S T L E C T U R E ;

BY

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BAPTISM.

"The parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for him after the manner of the law."—Luke ii. 27.

IN hurriedly glancing at the leading arguments for and against infant baptism, we have proved, 1. The Church of God has been, in its essential doctrines, the same in all ages; the change of its external ordinances, in its Antideluvian, Patriarchal, Jewish, or Christian condition, has never affected its unity, and the whole Bible must be consulted to know its constitution, rights, and privileges; believers on earth, and the saints in heaven, form merely parts of one vast family, who rejoice in the name, image, and redemption of Jesus. It is therefore presumptuous in man to endeavour to separate what the Lord has made essentially one. 2. The Abrahamic covenant, delivered at different times, and consisting of various particulars, embraced the gospel with all its blessings, spiritual and temporal, present and future. It is therefore sinful to secularize what God has made so spiritual. 3. By divine authority, children once enjoyed religious privileges;

by that authority alone can they be deprived of these rights, excommunicated from the church, and, for the time, handed over to Satan ; since an unrepealed law remains in all its original force, it must be highly culpable in man, without the divine sanction, to deprive either old or young, of what God has conferred. 4. That authority has never been given : on the contrary, there are repeated promises that infants should retain the same position in the Christian as in the Jewish dispensation ; the Hebrews, the apostles, and our Saviour, acted upon these promises ; and Christians are bound, if they would not be charged with will-worship, to follow their Redeemer's example. 5. As circumcision was the initiatory rite of the ancient, and baptism is that of the Christian household of faith, children, having received the one, are, upon the unrepealed law of God, entitled to the other. 6. When a precept is demanded for infant baptism, none can be more explicit than, "The promise is to you and to your *children*." We have not only this direct precept, but the example of the apostles in baptizing so many households "into the name of Jesus ;" of that promise, baptism—though not the seal of regeneration—is the sign, seal, or token ; and it must be a grievous wrong to rob "little ones" of their rights and privileges so kindly granted and secured by the Word of God.

. In considering the mode of baptism, we discarded heathen authority in language and practice, as utterly incompetent to decide whether pouring or immersion is the Scriptural mode of the ordinance. We have found, 1. Even the Greek words, which are so confidently quoted by our opponents to prove immersion, often give no specific evidence on the subject, and what they do give, is against and not in favour of immersion. 2. The immersion of one individual by another, as a public religious act, is unknown in the Scriptures, and even among the heathen. 3. The Spirit is uniformly repre-

sented as coming down, or being poured down ; and since the mode of administering the ordinance should symbolize, as nearly as possible, the thing which it signifies, pouring, and not plunging, is the Scriptural mode of baptism. 4. From the most authentic sources of information on the subject, immersion was introduced, like a full meal among the Corinthians at the Lord's Supper—so condemned by Paul, when men superstitiously imagined that they would receive the thing signified in proportion to the extent which they enjoyed the sign, and when a complete immersion in water was supposed to secure a full immersion in the Holy Spirit. Having thus arisen in corrupt and troubled quarters, it may have its occasional converts and advocates ; but it may expect to retire before the advancement of sound knowledge, and to give place to more correct views of Bible truth—the ultimate fate of all will-worship.

Our present subjects of discussion are,

I. The duties of parents. If children still claim, upon the authority of God, their religious privileges, it must be an important question, Who are the proper parties to present them for baptism ? Relationship, situation, interest, Scripture, and honour, direct to the parents.

1st. Relationship. We are aware that the practice of having godfathers and godmothers, who may be entire strangers, is of ancient date, and even now prevails in a section of the Church. At what time it originated, is involved in mystery ; but, in the earliest traces of its history, the father and mother of the infant, not neutral persons, were so designated, because, *next to God*, they stood related to the child, and were bound to train him in the fear, nurture, and admonition of the Lord. Hence the origin of the name. The situation of a sponsor for a child is thus one of the most solemn, though its obligations are too seldom known and felt. Whatever views of it the engaging parties may entertain, it

is an actual vow to the Most High, that, to the utmost of their ability and opportunity, they shall instruct the child, or see him instructed, as one dedicated to his Maker. It is sometimes alleged, in apology for substituting strangers for the parents, that these are often incompetent for their duties. This may be a lamentable truth ; but it does not remove their sacred obligations, in which, if they are ignorant, they should be instructed. They are the natural and proper guardians of their children ; and if their duties are unperformed through ignorance or vice, their sin is augmented, not diminished. It is also well known, that the choice of sponsors is frequently determined by mere worldly interests, as relationship, rank, favour, or the prospect of a gift. Selfishness and lucre are thus carried to the baptismal font, and the babe is dedicated to his Creator amidst the mean passions of humanity. It might likewise be urged that many, if not the majority of these godfathers and godmothers, neither know, nor intend to discharge, the most delicate and difficult duties which man can undertake—the rearing of an immortal soul for the glory of God and happiness of eternity. This is a position demanding the most serious and prayerful consideration, for its responsibilities are to Jehovah and not to man alone.

Except, therefore, when unable by necessity, parents are the rightful parties to present their children for baptism. If the mother, like Rachel, having given birth to the loved one, just clasp him to her throbbing bosom, breathe a prayer for heaven's blessing on her son, and then close her eyes in death ; if the father also has been stricken down, when his child was about to behold the light, and the little stranger be an orphan from his cradle ; or if, from his occupation, the father have few opportunities of superintending the best interests of his now motherless family, then others, able and willing to occupy the place of parents, may undertake the task ; but, except in cases of such extremity, neither father nor mother is

at liberty to devolve their duty upon others. It is their right and honour to acknowledge that their children are gifts from their heavenly Father ; to render him thanks for his kindness ; to dedicate their little ones to his service ; to confess they are bound to walk before their household with perfect hearts ; to own that the care of a never-dying spirit is entrusted to their charge ; and to engage that, as they shall answer the Judge of all, they shall be faithful. These are duties which, however seldom understood, are among the most sacred between man and his Maker. What would be thought of the gratitude, the loyalty, or the right-heartedness of the subject, who had received a special favour from his sovereign, which that ruler alone could give, and for which the favoured recipient was bound personally to render thanks, and who, regardless of his substitute's character and worth, should carelessly employ another to appear in his stead ? His just condemnation would be universal. What, then, shall be said of the parents who, with the utmost indifference to the Almighty's beneficence and their own honour, endeavour to evade their personal responsibilities, give him thanks by proxies who are perhaps more destitute of piety than themselves, or who at least have no right so to interfere ? This is adding insult to neglect, and doubling their crime. Only one of the ten cured lepers returned personally to thank the Healer, and he alone received our Redeemer's approbation. No parent can reasonably expect the divine benediction upon his infant and household, unless, with a grateful heart and humble obedience, he feel and confess the goodness of the Lord.

2d. Situation. Parents alone are, from their very position, best fitted for watching, with unabating affection and solicitude, the earliest dawning of the youthful mind ; for checking the first symptoms of waywardness ; and implanting the holy principles of religion and morality. None are so favour-

ably situated for imparting those instructions requisite for earning their daily bread with respectability, though perhaps by the sweat of their brow ; for teaching the gainfulness of honesty, manly respect for their fellows, the love of God to mankind, with his claims upon our regard in return, and a desire of immortal bliss. We do not mean, therefore, dragging them about, unprotected by parents, on holidays and festivals, to distant sight-seeing, whilst, unqualified to appreciate the spectacle, they are untaught in more important matters at home. It may be well-meant, but is injurious, thus to make children men and antiquarians, and teach them, before the time, to do without their parents—a lesson in which few need to be trained. It begets an early habit of rambling, and fosters an unsettled and ambitious spirit which too soon scorns both parental restraint and the quiet routine of the humble avocations of every-day life. That spirit, which common discernment and foresight, founded on a knowledge of human nature, relatives might have prevented, has proved fatal to thousands. Benjamin might have loved to see the wonders of Egypt, and might have wished to accompany his brothers, but Jacob wisely kept him under his own protection, “Lest peradventure mischief befall him.” When Paul was a child, he spake, thought, and acted as one. Timothy received, beneath the domestic roof, the elements of that knowledge which made him so distinguished and useful in the world, and which alone maketh wise unto salvation. When qualified for the undertaking, but not till then, did he commence his travels. Even for an adult to travel without previous preparation, is lost labour. A child has his own locality to move in, his own lessons to learn, and when he is removed from the sphere ordained by Providence, the consequences are uniformly pernicious.

Sight-seeing is good, when kept in its proper place, but it dissipates and enfeebles the mind, when it supplants more

substantial knowledge. Hence one prolific source of the frivolities deemed so necessary now on the Lord's Day, to dispel the ennui of multitudes, and the small regard paid to religion by men destitute of stable principles. Their minds, rendered flippant, or untaught in youth, are either empty or filled with trifles; and having neither strength of judgment nor a stock of knowledge to fall back upon and feed the heart, they must be kept in action and gratified by ever-changing scenes. To these men—adults in years yet children in moral attainments—there is in retirement, no rest, no enjoyment, no happiness; even an hour's solitary meditation is misery. When speaking of those—among whom Wardlaw, Chalmers, and other benefactors of their race, are leaders—who denounce the tyranny that would rob the labouring man of his Sabbath, these modern philosophers are lavish of their epithets, "Sabbatarians, Puritans," or, "Hypocrites," terms which, though meant to be opprobrious, involve no argument, merely show the spirit of the men, and honour the abused. They are strangers to the value of mental acquirements or of the human soul, the sweets of fellowship in public and private with a being of infinite purity, and to the contemplation of a God that "is love," or of heaven's rapturous bliss. In their ignorance, they wonder why others should take such delight in these engrossing themes, which alone are the true suppliers of strength to both mind and body, recruiting their exhausted energies and preparing them for future labours by drawing down spiritual vigour from the fountain of endless felicity. The Lord's day is therefore a weariness unto them* unless they are amused with toys, or that day be spent in practices, to recover from the debilitating effects of which, at least, the following Monday is necessary. For *their* pleasure, they would deprive others of their Sabbath, make them, by ceaseless toil, slaves to their puerile gratifica-

* Mal. i. 13.

tion, and thus, trampling on the high claims of religion, and reducing the Lord's day to a level with the other six, would annihilate the only few hours that give man full quiet to feed his noblest powers, adore his Creator, and prepare for eternity. This they call enjoyment, and cry for more ! Alas ! how some men glory in their shame ! But, if parents and guardians would save our rising generation from such unholy conduct, they must avoid the demoralizing causes by which it is produced, must treat children as such, and lay a solid foundation of religion and morality at the proper season, that manhood may finish the superstructure.

The duties of parents extend beyond the mere imparting of instructions, or even maintaining an upright example. None are so closely bound to pray with and for the future members of society and pillars of the Church, teaching their little knees to bend at the throne of the Holy One, instructing their tender hearts to feel, and lips to utter, their petitions to Him who, as the guardian-angel of his people, takes "the lambs in his arms." If children are God's heritage, and if "he setteth the solitary in families," it must be the basest ingratitude in parents to neglect, or to devolve upon others—without some special reason—the incumbent task and responsibility of watching over our youths and moulding them in righteousness. To accomplish this arduous work, right-hearted parents will, with eagerness and gratitude, employ every afforded appliance, as aids to and not substitutes for their personal endeavours. Remembering that the stability of the community, their children's welfare, and their own quiet of conscience depend, under the divine blessing, upon their timely and faithful training of their young ones, they will not, as is too frequently the case with ill-regulated minds, imagine that they confer an honour on those who, voluntarily and without remuneration, render them assistance ; but will consider themselves and families the privileged

and profiting parties. Every opportunity will be embraced to impress upon the young heart, that man's bodily and mental powers are God's property, and an account of their use will be demanded; that a deep sense of Jehovah's presence—not as a hard task-master, but as a never-failing friend, a reprover of vice and rewarder of virtue—should be carried into every action, word, and thought; that bodily health, true prosperity in the world, peace of mind, and hope for the future, are inseparably connected with purity of heart, holiness of speech, and rectitude of deportment; that the way of transgressors is hard,* but that in keeping God's commandments "there is a great reward." Parents, labouring thus with diligence, prayer, and faith, may expect their children to be "like olive plants round about their table," and to realize the divine promise, "Behold that thus shall the man be blessed that feareth the Lord."†

3d. Self-interest. Parents, who neglect such duties, should not be surprised if they are treated with that disrespect which is so prevalent, and is, to some extent, the effect of their own misconduct. "Disobedience to parents" is at present a general and bitter cause of complaint, and is daily becoming more characteristic of the age. But who are commonly the original and worst offenders? Those who, by example if not by precept, train their children to overlook, perhaps despise, every law human and divine. Complete liberty for evil is thoughtlessly given when control should be exercised, and that freedom is forcibly taken when attempted subjection to restraint is too late. The mother may exert her utmost powers; but the ungodly father may more than undo all her good. We do not require to search for illustrations of this truth amongst the dregs of the community, where those of the tenderest years are "disciplined" into the service of Satan. These injured ones are found in the highest ranks of

* Pro. xiii. 15. † Ps. cxxviii. 3, 4.

society. The same causes everywhere produce the same results, with this difference, that they appear in upper life beneath a more polished exterior, and are the more culpable because more favourable circumstances have been abused. Sins, that would be deemed a disgrace amongst artizans, are considered only a mark "of spirit" in higher circles ; and the ruin of chastity, health, and soul, is converted into an apparent virtue, under the soft name of "sowing wild oats." They *are* wild, and unless erased from the book of God's remembrance by the atonement of Jesus, will stand forth in judgment and cry for justice. But in every class, the conduct of children is generally a certain index to their domestic tuition. Tares universally bear their own fruits. Parents who spend the Lord's day in indolence at home or in sinful conversation, deck their little ones in their finest dress for a Sabbath stroll, utter a falsehood or an oath, drain the largest portion of the intoxicating beverage, and hand the cup to their child to sip, gradually but securely destroy the moral feelings, sow the seeds which soon abound in the most baneful produce, and treasure up for themselves and their children bitterness and woe. Such parents may expect that the youth, who are not taught to revere and obey their Creator, will neither love nor obey earthly relatives. Prayerless and untaught families, therefore, are the plague-spot of our land ; the schools where profligate sons and daughters, husbands and wives, and the abandoned of all descriptions are reared. They are the prolific nurseries whence so many issue to disgrace and injure mankind, and to check and punish whom is one of the most vexing items in our country's expenditure. Homes, where the apostolic injunction should be felt in its utmost force, "Abstain from all appearance of evil," and which should be the springs of virtue and goodness, are thus transformed into pests of human life, and parents are the first who suffer.

4th. Scripture. Mary and Joseph permitted no strange arms to carry the promised Jesus to the temple for presentation, nor did they entrust his education exclusively to strange lips. He "was subject to his parents," which implies that instructions were faithfully given and kindly received. There is something in the fact, that a child's sympathies are drawn towards those who teach him the great truths of religion. Just in proportion as parents omit this duty, and allow others alone to perform it, do they transfer from themselves the esteem of their offspring, and lose those treasures of the heart, which surpass the gifts of fortune. That training may require every legitimate means; but for parents to neglect it is positive sin which never can be committed without a terrible retribution as a self-incurred penalty. It is an honour, not merely a duty, lovingly bestowed by the great Head of the Church, to educate our own children and support the gospel for ourselves: and whoever omits these duties, willingly deprives himself of the special blessings annexed to their performance. If the precious child Jesus—our incarnate Redeemer—was so consecrated in the temple and trained at home by the hands of parents, neither the place where, nor the individuals by whom, children should now, by the privilege which has been ordained for them, be given up to their Maker, can be long the subject of doubt or dispute with those who, in matters of such moment, adopt the Bible as their guide. They will follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth, that they and their households, being "baptized in the name of Jesus," may, like Samuel and their Saviour, grow in favour with God and with man, as they advance in days and in years.

Under the Jewish economy, fathers and mothers were strictly enjoined to teach their young ones the laws and statutes of the Lord, and by their instructions, prayers, and example, to lead them in the road of virtue and of faith.

They were to bend the plant whilst it was tender. This command is from one qualified to judge and authorised to enforce, and who, knowing whence the enemy of man derived his main strength, aimed his heaviest blows at its very centre. Nor is this sacred duty less binding now, when the mind of God is fully revealed in the completed volume of inspiration. There are not only former injunctions, unmitigated and unrepealed, but additional precepts impressed by the consideration, that "Christ loved us, and gave himself for us." It is an imperative duty that fathers provoke not their "children to wrath, but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord."* Were this, and similar commands carried into practice, as parents shall wish they had done, when they and their children are gathered on the last day, to witness for or against each other, the modern and benevolent proposal of "Reformatory Schools" would not be needed. These charitable institutions, so honourable to the originators, are painful evidence of the guilt of parents for neglected duties. They are partial efforts to correct a prevailing evil; and they may, in a few cases, be successful, but the unreached and unremoved source of that evil is ever sending forth upon society fresh bands of delinquents;—it is labouring to purify the stream whilst the fountain is still poisoned. Scripture alone supplies an effectual remedy, seizing the heart, and purifying the springs and principles of human action.

5th. Personal honour. Were parents faithful to themselves and their offspring, new charitable institutions for education, which are sad proofs of the expiring independence of our countrymen, and which tend to hasten its decease, would speedily be converted to other purposes. It is very kind in wealthy and influential individuals to subscribe for and support these seminaries, which evince either the involuntary pauperism of Britain, or what is worse, the self-procured

* Eph. vi. 4.

poverty and grovelling spirit of many among our labouring population. Penury may be no more a crime or disgrace than sickness is ; but when it is self-entailed, or assumed for gain, it is sin and shame ; and it is against *this* we lift our warning voice. Paul says,—“ If any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel.”* Such is the plain will of God on this important subject, and the provision here specified extends to both soul and body. The man, therefore, who fears God and keeps his commandments, will never, for a trivial benefit, sacrifice his rights, independence, and control over his children’s tuition, when, along with that sacrifice, he must pay homage to sectarianism, or individual interests, with which these imagined advantages are generally clogged. There are men—the more pitiable because they so humble themselves—who, feigning poverty and bartering an honourable name in exchange for the saving of a few pence, have participated in the really poor man’s property, and thus injured others by their own degradation. These individuals permit their little ones to be conducted by the hands of strangers, to one house of God, whilst they themselves worship in another. They seem insensible to the facts, that they are thereby slackening those cords of affection and religion which should bind households together in the Lord ; that they are instilling towards all externals in Christianity, an indifference which is too soon transferred to Christianity itself ; and are teaching the young that religion is so far an article of merchandise, and is to be estimated by the pecuniary gain or secular employment that it brings. They usually justify their conduct by the plea, that others do the same thing. So argued the boy who joined the plunderers of their neighbour’s orchard ; he went because they went : the apples were to be stolen, and he might as well have a share.

* I. Tim. v. .8

This class of persons must be diminished ; and we desire to accelerate their extinction. That their disappearance will one day take place, and that parents, awakened to a sense of their true position, will perform their duties more faithfully than at present, is an inevitable consequence of the progress of civilization and piety.

In our country, there are means and opportunities enough for educating all who, in these times, need assistance without the interference of either Church or State. Our workmen require, by industry, temperance, and frugality, merely to do their own work. It will, then, to their own honour, be done well, and they may expect that their dwellings will become "the habitations of righteousness." There would be no necessity for that centralization of energy and action—nor would it be permitted—by which a few engross and direct the education of the whole country, engendering in others, equally competent and entitled to act, an apathy, if not hostility, which is always injurious. To treat one portion of an enlightened community as worthless and dead, is a silent and certain method to deprive them of vital power, or to arouse them into opposition. Despotism can live in ignorance alone ; and to infuse new life into the body politic, it must be told that, to perform its functions well, its latent faculties need only to be called into activity.

Much may be done by our rulers to elevate our nation still higher among the kingdoms of the earth ; but a real, sound, and effectual reform must come from the people. Intelligence and piety must be in every English home, however humble, and enthroned by every hearth, to banish intemperance, selfishness, and impiety from our borders, and to infuse a healthy, permanent, and religious feeling among all classes of society. Minds, thus enlightened and upright, will seek still further enlargement, and lay every department of nature, art, and religion, under contribution to gain their worthy ob-

ject. They will gratefully accept of every proper aid, but they will maintain their independence by thinking and acting in their own strength. Nor are these noble ends beyond our reach. A people, who can expend nearly seventy millions annually upon dissipation which ruins everything precious for time and eternity, have but to reform themselves, to occupy the proud position of self-sustainers and self-educators who may teach even our senators wisdom. Some smile doubtfully at every attempt, as being the well-meant effort of unavailing benevolence, to educate and elevate the illiterate and degraded amongst us, who, it is affirmed, are sunk in vice beyond the hope of recovery. Though not insensible to the peculiar difficulties of the task, we are not among these weeping prophets. Abstaining from crime, striving to do good, and fearing God, are treasures open for all; and it is man's own fault when he permits the trail of the serpent to sully his conscience and rob him of his peace. There is a nobility in every man's soul, that needs only to be rightly touched and fostered, to raise him at least from the lowest depths of debasement. Nor are the most abandoned and reprobate always found among the poorest and the most unlearned. Our humble countrymen, when higher ranks were indifferent or hostile, have repeatedly evinced that they knew and could perform what is right; that amidst the disadvantages of their early life, they retained a delicacy of feeling, and sense of manly dignity, unknown to many born in more favourable circumstances and surrounded by all that wealth can give. One portion of our workmen still possess leaven enough to transform the mighty mass, were the regenerating means called into legitimate operation. These "excellent of the earth," with few to instruct or guide, have escaped the contamination of evil example, and though poor, have continued virtuous; or, having felt the bitterness of sin, have fled from its pollution, and their self-respect is one of the best

securities against moral degradation. Every parent, therefore, rearing his own offspring as devoutly as if the welfare of society depended upon his fidelity, should induce the careless within his reach to act a similar part. We then might soon expect, "That our sons will be as plants grown up in their youth ; that our daughters will be as corner-stones, polished after the similitude of a palace ; *and that there be no complaining in our streets.* Happy is that people that is in such a case ; yea, happy is that people whose God is the Lord."* May that time speedily arrive, for it shall witness the crowning glory of our land !

As evidence of what may be accomplished by perseverance and well directed knowledge, let the following facts suffice, and be encouragement. In the very heart of Whitechapel, there is the "Industrial Free School of Gower's Walk," founded in 1807 by Mr. William Davies, and at which about 200 boys and girls are admirably taught. This school also originated in voluntary benevolence, but has been exempt,—from the very nature of its operations,—from the common mismanagement and spoliation of such endowments. The children, besides being taught the usual branches of an ordinary education, are trained to habits of steadiness and industry. They have a printing press, at which small work is done ; and a Savings' Bank, by which interest is allowed for their occasional deposits. At the age of fourteen they leave the seminary, and are readily engaged by employers who, in their previous tuition, have some guarantee that they will be faithful labourers. This institution supports itself, distributing £70 annually in rewards, has a yearly balance in hand of £400, and fully £3000 of a surplus fund ! Can the wise and philanthropic of Berwick not go and do likewise ? It might be a profitable speculation. Let our townsmen—if the effort be required where a good supply

* Ps. cxliv. 12, 14, 15.

is so abundant—gather up and properly direct their resources and energies; let them avoid that party spirit and that assumed superiority of one denomination over another, which prejudice alone can justify, and which have been so injurious in other quarters, and thus obtaining easily whatever is needful, they may soon rank with the most enlightened and independent of the land.

Should every other resource fail parents in suitably educating their children, there is a large and princely provision for them, of which, perhaps, few are aware. To have an ample supply of means, they have only to wrest that inheritance from the unlawful hands which have grasped it, and bring it back to its rightful owners and objects. Our wandering, neglected, and depraved population have been entirely defrauded of their great heritage of school and hospital endowments, and then denounced as vile by those who have lived luxuriously upon their bequests. Or, these institutions have been so hedged around by by-laws and sectarian enactments, unauthorized by the terms of the foundation, that the honourable and independent cannot accept the boon. What the Government grants—at present £450,000—we must first pay; and what is bestowed as a gift with the one hand, is exacted with the other by legal pains and penalties. But, according to the report of the Charity Commissioners, there are, in England and Wales, no fewer than 2,912 schools endowed by *voluntary* offerings, and secured by *will* for the behoof of the fatherless and destitute. The income of these charitable education endowments is £428,122 a-year. This is the large sum accounted for, and more is still undiscovered. If Lord Brougham's estimate be correct, then there are £30,000,000 of capital, or £1,200,000 annually at usual interest, set apart by voluntary gifts for the support of the poor and the education of the young! This is as much the poor man's own, as the nobleman's property is his inheritance.

How have these immense funds been disbursed? Let Lord Chancellor Eldon give the reply: "Charity Estates all over the land are dealt with in a way amounting to the most direct breach of trust." Most of them, then, have been absorbed by wealthy trustees, retiring pensions, and the education of children who, from the rank of their parents, should deem themselves disgraced by reaping the benefit of what is not their own, and what has been obtained by worse than overt stealth. The poor man's child, the orphan, the helpless, have been thrust out of their property, and aristocratic, despotic avarice has taken possession! In the eighteenth century of Christianity, there is full cause for the prophet's heavy complaint: "To turn aside the needy from judgment, and to take away the right of the poor of my people, that widows may be their prey, and that they may rob the fatherless."*

The annual income of the Blue Coat School of London is £43,155 4s. 6d. The charter provides that its objects shall be "poor orphans—children, chiefly boys, between the ages of seven and ten, not having any adequate means of being educated and maintained." Its excellent education is still open for vast improvement; but how many of its pupils are of the class described? or rather, are there any of this class at all? We have in this country, at an average, 12,000 orphans, of whom about only one-sixth are provided for by voluntary societies. The Dulwich College alone, however, if properly conducted, would maintain and educate all the orphans in and around London. At Pocklington in Yorkshire, an individual—favoured with a party badge—was receiving £1000 annually for teaching *one scholar*! At Bath, and various places, buildings, intended "for the accommodation of *poor scholars*," have been basely converted into other and sectarian purposes. Men, of high status in the world, have long reaped

* Isa. x. 2.

a golden harvest from these endowments, and it is full time that the fruits were gathered by those for whom the seed was kindly sown. The really poor man has been robbed of his *own* ; and, like a serf, he has gratefully accepted a small gift, the education of his children at a Sabbath-school, which costs nothing, or a pleasure trip to amuse youthful minds, from those who have feasted upon his largess, and doled out a pittance to him as if it were a favour. Flattery pleases all, and time-serving commonly secures a temporary fame, whilst exposing the offences, of either individuals or communities, is generally, for a period, an ungracious and unpopular work ; but can our countrymen longer submit to be thus treated as slaves ? We hope they are not yet so lost to a sense of their dignity and powers. There are men who, having risen by their own unwearied energies from the humblest ranks, are, at every hazard, willing to tell them of their rights and privileges,—as well as of their faults,—and if they afterwards endure their thralldom, they will have the farther humiliation of knowing that they are willing bondsmen, and prefer their chains to the warm pulsations of free men. Arouse, then, ye parents ; claim your own, educate your children, save your country, and honour yourselves by revering your God.

II. The salvation of children dying in infancy. This is a theme on which a wide-spread interest and profound feeling exist. At the loss of children, the sorrow, which the Almighty has placed in the depths of the human soul, is protracted and lawful. The more sensitive and affectionate the parent's heart, the more poignant is the grief. The inquiry is natural, When torn from the fond embrace of earthly friends, does Jesus take them to himself ? Are they clothed in robes of bliss, when their little bodies are, amidst tears and bitterness of heart, consigned to the dust ? We are as ignorant of the mode in which the Spirit applies the bless-

ings of Christ's atonement to the souls of expiring children to prepare them for glory, as of his operations in forming an adult a new creature in Jesus. We know, however, that there is only one medium of access to the Father ; one door by which heaven can be entered, and that is, The rent vail of Immanuel's humanity. The redemption of children, therefore, must be according to grace.

I do not speak dogmatically on their salvation. The Scriptures seem to take it for granted, rather than give explicit precepts on the subject ; our evidence therefore is more inferential than positive ; but it is not on that account the less strong. To know the extent of their deliverance, we must ascertain their condition. Some assert that children are involved in the consequences, not in the guilt of Adam's fall. This doctrine gives us an effect without a cause, which, being both unphilosophical and unscriptural, represents the Almighty as punishing them without their being previously regarded as transgressors. If the wages of sin *be* death, then children must participate in the first of these since they are subject to the second. As far as their life extends here, they are exposed to the same consequences of the fall, as the most mature in years. We are likewise informed that a remedy has been provided to save them from the guilt of Adam's fall. We rejoice in that provision. But the Lord never does anything in vain ; and if their case had not been otherwise hopeless, he would not have laid their help upon Jesus. The very fact that a remedy is provided, decidedly proves that one was needed, and that they were involved in *all* the consequences of a violated law. We remark, therefore,

1st. From their birth, they are subject to bodily pain, mental sorrow, and natural death. Like those who reach the full age of man, they are "born unto trouble, as the sparks fly upward." If it be true that we are shapen in sin and brought forth in iniquity, this condition involves both spiri-

tual and eternal death ; and children are thus implicated in both the sin and effects of Adam's guilt. In Rom. v. 12, 14, 18, we read : " Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin ; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned. Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression, who is the figure of him that was to come. Therefore, as by the offence of one, judgment came upon all men to condemnation ; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life." All, without respect of age and person, are thus treated as guilty in law ; and when an individual is doomed to death, his offence, in the estimation of his judge, must deserve the penalty. This is the terrible condemnation under which, by nature, lie the whole family of man. How awful must be the curse of sin ! How great and blessed the salvation from it ! Truly, " The wages of sin is death ; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord."

2d. The mercy of God, towards children, in our blessed Redeemer. They are indeed implicated in Adam's sin ; but this is not what is commonly understood by accountability. We apprehend that no one connected with merely the guilt of our first parents shall be condemned for that offence alone ; for its penal consequences are so removed, and an atonement provided for actual transgressions, that all may be saved. It is indeed written :—" Without faith, it is impossible to please God." But this is said of adults exclusively, and never, in any case, either for privilege or salvation, of children. God is holy, just, and good, and rewards " every man as his deeds deserve." Hence he says, Deut. i. 39.—" Moreover, your little ones, which ye said should be a prey, and your children which in that day had no knowledge between good and evil, they shall go in thither, and unto them will I give it, and they shall possess it." Because they were not chargeable.

with actual transgression, he then spared them for earth, in despite of man's iniquity, and he will, in like manner, carry out his purposes of mercy towards them for eternity ; having bestowed on them the earthly Canaan, though their fathers sinned and were punished, he will not exclude them from the celestial inheritance on account of their father's iniquity. The Judge of all the earth doeth right.

3d. God's own language and care respecting infants. They have been sometimes overwhelmed in destruction, as when the old world was destroyed by the deluge. They were then taken away in mercy, for none were left to care for their wants. The mature were visited with deserved indignation, and if, when the adults were cut down, the Lord removed their little ones to his own palace where their every want would be amply supplied for ever, and their tender lips employed in his service, instead of being taught to blaspheme his name and provoke his wrath, he thereby evinced his infinite mercy and love. But still farther, 1. He took them into covenant with himself. Deut. xxix. 10, 11, 12.—“ Ye stand this day all of you before the Lord your God—Your little ones, your wives—That thou shouldest enter into covenant with the Lord thy God, and into his oath, which the Lord thy God maketh with thee this day.” It was not for mere temporal enjoyments that Jehovah formed this close relationship with himself and children ; it was for spiritual and eternal, as well as temporal and temporary blessings ; and though he remove them from the latter of these, he will not deny them the former. 2. He accepts their praise. Ps. viii. 2.—“ Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings hast thou ordained strength.” If their aspirations be acceptable on earth, that acceptance is proof and pledge that they shall praise him in heaven. 3. He reproves and punishes men for cruelty towards children. Jer. xix. 3, 4.—“ Hear ye the word of the Lord, O kings of Judah, and inhabitants of Jerusalem ; Thus saith the Lord

of hosts, the God of Israel, Behold, I will bring evil upon this place, the which whosoever heareth, his ears shall tingle. Because they have forsaken me, and have estranged this place, and have burnt incense in it to other Gods, whom neither they nor their fathers have known, nor the kings of Judah, *and have filled this place with the blood of innocents.*" They must be the special objects of his regard, when, in the most solemn manner, he thus connects their murder in idolatrous worship with the dishonour done to himself by that idolatry ; and since he so terribly avenges their blood in this life, he will surely never consign them to woe in the next.

4. Judgments have been suspended on their account. Jonah, iv. 10, 11.—"Then said the Lord, Thou hast had pity on the gourd, for the which thou hast not laboured, neither madest it grow ; which came up in a night and perished in a night. And should not I spare Nineveh, that great city, wherein are more than six score thousand persons that cannot discern between their right hand and their left hand ?" If he so spares both them, and others on their account, when the crimes of adults cry for judgment, he will certainly never cast them "into outer darkness," when, in early life, he removes them from the earth.

5. They occupy a prominent place in his worship. His people are even commanded to gather the children, and to sanctify a fast, in the hope of obtaining mercy. Joel, ii. 15-18.—"Blow the trumpet in Zion, sanctify a fast, call a solemn assembly ; gather the people, sanctify the congregation, assemble the elders, gather the children, and those that suck the breasts : Let the priests, the ministers of the Lord, weep between the porch and the altar : Then will the Lord be jealous for his land, and pity his people." Connect with this august congregation, another of a similar description, under Jehoshaphat, when the Moabites invaded Judah, when the hearts of all men trembled with alarm, and when God alone could ward off their threatened destruction. II. Chro. xx.

13.—“ And all Judah stood before the Lord, with their little ones, their wives, and their children.” Is it for nothing, or merely for a temporal and temporary purpose, that the Almighty singles out “ the little ones” for these special honours, and that they occupy such a distinguished position in his providential dealings with his people? However unworthy too many parents may be of the consolation, his sparing and shewing mercy, driving off enemies and preserving peace, both for their own sakes, and on behalf of guilty adults on their account, are evidence that his care for children and kindness to them upon earth, are but earnest of their future glory when they are numbered with the dead :—

“ See Isr’el’s gentle shepherd stands
With all-engaging charms ;
Hark how he calls the tender lambs,
And folds them in his arms !

“ Permit them to approach, he cries,
Nor scorn their humble name ;
For ’twas to bless such souls as these
The Lord of angels came !”

4th. Christ’s treatment of children. His deep sympathy for domestic afflictions and his love for children are marked features in his earthly character. This affection he displayed on various occasions, and in a manner not to be misunderstood. 1. He adduces them as examples of disposition and Christian character for even the adult subjects of his kingdom. Mat. xviii. 2, 3.—“ And Jesus called a little child unto him, and set him in the midst of them, And said, Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.” 2. He denounces a curse upon those who insult, injure, or offend them. Mat. xviii. 6.—“ But whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were

drowned in the depth of the sea." How dreadful is this threatening ! Is there no danger of offending them ? And what offence is greater than robbing them of their religious privileges, casting them out of the Church, handing them over to the wicked one, or neglecting to train them for Christ and immortal glory ? This is to make them poor indeed. 3. He blesses those who do them good. Mat. x. 42.—" And whosoever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones a cup of cold water in the name of a disciple, verily I say unto you, he shall in nowise lose his reward." 4. They sang his praises, and he accepted their homage. Mat. xxi. 15, 16.—" And when the chief priests and scribes saw the wonderful things that he did, and the children crying in the temple, and saying, Hosannah to the son of David ; they were sore displeased, And said unto him, Hearest thou what these say ? And Jesus saith unto them, Yea ; have ye never read, Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings thou hast perfected praise ?" 5. He declares that their angels minister before God ; that is, the Lord watches over and guards them with special care, having arranged for their protection here, and for transporting them to bliss when they die. Mat. xviii. 10.—" Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones ; for I say unto you, That in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven." 6. They shall not perish. Mat. xviii. 14.—" Even so it is not the will of your Father which is in heaven, that one of these little ones should perish." Let no man gainsay what he so explicitly declares ; if none of them shall perish, they must be redeemed. 7. He affirms that they constitute a large portion of the kingdom of heaven. Mark, x. 14.—" But when Jesus saw it, he was much displeased, and said unto them, Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not ; for of such is the kingdom of God." Also, Mat. xix. 14.—" But Jesus said, Suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come unto

me ; for of such is the kingdom of heaven." These are sweet and certain promises which teem with balmy hope to bereaved and believing parents. 8. He laid his hands on them and blessed them. Mark, x. 16.—" And he took them up in his arms, put his hands upon them, and blessed them." If worthy of his benediction now, his saving grace will not be denied when they tread that valley where alone "the lamp of his love is the guide through the gloom." 9. John beheld them before the throne. Rev. xx. 12.—" And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God ; and the books were opened ; and another book was opened, which is the book of life ; and the dead were judged out of these things which were written in the books, according to their works." The word translated *small*, here signifies infants, in opposition to adults described as *great*. Why are children before this Judge? Not to answer for actual transgressions of which they were not guilty ; but to be proclaimed, before the assembled throng, as being redeemed through his atonement and Spirit, and to be triumphantly conducted into endless beatitude.

Let these things be combined together, and how great was Christ's love for little ones ; how large his blessings are ; how unlike their treatment from some men ! These cut them off from his visible fellowship as unworthy and unfit to be dedicated to his service by the initiatory rite of Christianity, whilst, as his beloved, he both takes them into his Church and receives them into heaven. Did he ever do more to even the most faithful adults ? If he has conferred on them his richest favours on earth, promised them eternal rest above, and been so liberal with the realities of our holy faith, to withhold the mere sign of these realities—the outward seal by which they are given up to his name and service—must be a grievous wrong to the lambs of his flock, and an insult to himself. Parents, whose children are not baptized, can never dedicate them to Jesus by any other public religious act ; and failing

in a solemn duty to themselves and their offspring, *they must be guilty of sin*. Here the great moral precept is equally true as in all other matters: "Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me."

It is cause of unfeigned gratulation, that our blessed Redeemer's sympathies are restricted to neither old nor young, and that his ordinances are suited and free to all whom he claims as his friends. But parents, not knowing how soon they and their dearest little ones must part, are under special obligations to discharge their duties with fidelity. Under Jesus, they have charge of immortal souls, and at an early unexpected moment, both they and their loved ones may be called into eternity. When children are removed in infancy and relations left in sorrow and tears, there must be some comfort in the reflection, that, with humble, believing and penitent hands, they were laid upon the altar of public consecration to his service; and if they are admitted to the honours, exercises, and felicities of the "Church of the first-born, which are written in heaven," these parents may rejoice that, instead of unkindly thrusting them from the Church below, they performed their duty to them while they lived on earth; and when they both meet to part no more, it will be one drop of sweetness in their cup of bliss, that they were joined here in brotherhood with Jesus.

If there be one thing more oppressive than another to our heart, it is the thought that, on the day of final judgment, parents, whose offspring have been ruined through their neglect or baneful example—too faithfully copied—may be constrained to assent to the equitable sentence which excludes their children from celestial happiness, and consigns them to endless woe! How terrible the thought, that parents, instrumental in giving existence to never dying spirits, and who should have led them, by faith and prayer,

to Jesus and to life, have only augmented the number of the reprobate ! Their own souls lost, and the ruin of children laid to their charge ! Then shall they know from bitter experience, what on earth they scornfully despised : " Woe unto the wicked ! it shall be ill with him ; for the reward of his hands shall be given him. The house of the wicked shall be overthrown."

On the other hand, few things are more pleasing than the reflection, that believing parents, and children " not lost, but gone before," shall meet and know each other, where the pain of separation is never felt, and farewell never heard ; that, having been faithful in all things as God gave them power and opportunity, they shall embrace each other in heavenly love, and ceaselessly praise their common Redeemer. Believing parents are thus instrumental in increasing their own felicity, by adding to " the just made perfect," enlarging the travail of Immanuel's soul, and making him the more satisfied. Then shall they realise the gracious truth, in its utmost spirituality and power, " Say ye to the righteous, that it shall be well with him ; for they shall eat the fruit of their doings ; and the tabernacle of the upright shall flourish."

Let the children of devout parents be affectionate and dutiful, blessing the Lord for their inestimable privileges. Let us all love Jesus with the whole soul, esteem each other out of " a pure heart fervently," and we shall know, even in this life, the blessedness of the song :

" We hope to join the throng,
And soon their pleasures share,
And sing the everlasting song
With all the ransomed there."



